

KEY CONCEPTS OF ROMANIAN HISTORY

**Alternative
Approaches
to Socio-Political
Languages**

Edited by
**Victor Neumann
and Armin Heinen**

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to Socio-Political Languages**

edited by

Victor Neumann and Armin Heinen



Central European University Press
Budapest–New York

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English translation © Camelia-Dana Mihăilescu
Originally published in Romanian language by Polirom.

Published in 2013 by

Central European University Press

An imprint of the
Central European University Limited Liability Company
Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary
Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000
Fax: +36-1-327-3183
E-mail: ceupress@ceu.hu
Website: www.ceupress.com

400 West 59th Street, New York NY 10019, USA
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Financial support for the translation was granted by the
Romanian Cultural Institute, Bucharest.

The publication of the volume was supported
by the Volkswagen Stiftung.

ISBN 978-615-5225-16-1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Istoria României prin concepte. English.

Key concepts of Romanian history : alternative approaches to socio-political
languages / edited by Victor Neumann and Armin Heinen.
pages cm

Originally published in Romanian under title: Istoria României prin
concepte. Iasi : Polirom, 2012.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-6155225161 (hardbound)

1. Romania--Historiography--Congresses. 2. Romania--History--Congresses. I.
Neumann, Victor, author editor of compilation. II. Heinen, Armin, author,
editor of compilation. III. Title.

DR216.7.I8613 2013
949.80072--dc23

2012048146

Printed in Hungary by
Prime Rate Kft.

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Preface to the English Edition

Reinhart Koselleck's impressive oeuvre—one which has been extensively discussed in the most recent publications pertaining to the field of conceptual history¹—has generated many original problematizations and theorizations that have influenced the types of approaches put forth by contemporary historiography. At the same time, the scholarly endeavor to adapt *Begriffsgeschichte* to different geographic, cultural and national spaces should also take into consideration local, regional or national specificities. This should be the case because no place in Europe or the world can accommodate concepts whose original meanings remain unchanged. Thus, we should accompany Koselleck's prolific ideas within the freedom to choose the most adequate methods and to apply them in a particular context, time, historical process or event.

Key-Concepts of Romanian History. Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages is a collection of studies that focuses on the concepts that have shaped Romanian cultural and political identity. It analyzes the dominant ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as their socio-political impact, and discusses the formation of the Romanian national state and its transition towards modernity by means of concepts such as patriotism, ethno-culture, property, and constitution. It highlights the importance of regional, communitarian-linguistic or religious diversity in view of an accurate understanding of Romania as a result of multiple influences and cultural heritages. It reveals a number of essential aspects

¹ Javier Fernández Sebastián (ed.), *Political Concepts and Time. New Approaches to Conceptual History*. (Santander: Cantabria University Press, Mc Graw-Hill Interamericana de España, 2011), 442. This is the most recent publication in the field, a volume which clearly demonstrates the broadness, profundity and usefulness of conceptual history and the history of concepts for contemporary humanist and socio-political sciences.

regarding the formation of socio-political languages and mentalities as a result of the translation or import of words, notions and concepts. The volume comprises several ample studies, which are innovative from the point of view of content, analysis, and hypothesis, and which offer an international perspective on Romania's past and present. We have prepared this English edition following the positive reception of the Romanian edition of the book in academic circles and larger intellectual milieus. The publication of this volume has been made possible thanks to a fruitful cooperation with CEU Press, especially editor Nóra Vörös and director Krisztina Kós, to whom we extend our utmost gratitude.

Timișoara/Aachen, January 2012

Victor Neumann

Armin Heinen

Foreword

Decoding key-concepts of Romanian socio-political languages is a welcome and useful endeavor for understanding the past, for the thorough theoretical grounding of the present, as well as for the thoughtful planning of future projects. Conceptual history contributes to acquiring knowledge about the semantics of concepts throughout their evolution in time. This innovative method of history elaborated for the German case by Reinhart Koselleck is also highly applicable to Romanian culture, since a significant number of the concepts employed in the latter stem from the nineteenth century, expressing ideals that are alien to our times. When examined in its relation to the process of language modernization, to social history and the history of political thought, conceptual history can contribute to the understanding and promotion of European values, and to the fostering, among Romania's population, of mental reflexes consonant with those of the Western world.

In the wake of two totalitarian regimes—which used their knowledge about the country's past in favor of their extremist ideologies—rewriting Romanian history has become an imperative. Having been interested for a long time in such a project and being among its initiators in Central and South-Eastern Europe, we strongly believe that the Europeanization/Westernization of Romania is tied, among other things, to how history is read. A major change of the political regime—the passage from a monologous-totalitarian discourse to a dialogical-democratic one—presupposes the renewal of languages, the acquisition of alternative cultural and political thought benchmarks, as well as a distancing from the behaviors and practices of previous eras.

In September 2009, the West University of Timișoara hosted the first international conference dedicated to the history of the basic concepts of

Romanian socio-political languages. Honored by the participation of an impressive academic roster, including professors and researchers from universities in Germany, the U.S., France, Holland, Hungary and Romania, the conference immediately drew the attention of top-notch academic circles, both in Europe and worldwide. The present volume presents the proceedings of that conference.

The contributors to the present volume are: Armin Heinen (Aachen), Klaus Bochmann (Leipzig), Keith Hitchins (Urbana & Champaign), Alexandre Escudier (Paris), Angela Harre (Frankfurt/Oder), Dietmar Müller (Leipzig), Hans-Christian Maner (Mainz), Wim van Meurs (Nijmegen), Edda Binder Iijima (Heidelberg), Balázs Trencsényi (Budapest), Ruxandra Demetrescu (Bucharest), Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, Bogdan Murgescu (Bucharest), and Victor Neumann (Timișoara). Although there are differences in terms of information processing, and Koselleck's method cannot be found in all texts, it is important that the authors have focused on the history of Romania, advancing alternative viewpoints, and examining those angles that so far have been broadly neglected by Romanian historians.

Using as a point of departure concrete historical moments, the contributors to this volume focus on key-concepts such as *politics, political person, democracy, Europe, liberalism, constitution, property, progress, homeland, patriotism, neam* (Romanian for kin), *nation, national character, national specificity, education, totalitarianism, democracy, democratic, democratization, transition, censorship, manipulation, and freedom of expression*. The authors aim to reveal specific aspects belonging to Romania's past and present and to identify the languages that either preceded or succeeded Romania's most relevant political events. They also offer alternative approaches to Romanian culture through the relationship between the elite and the masses thanks to novel reflections on issues that bring out the delayed and unfinished modernization processes within the Romanian society and state. The aim of this volume has been to articulate the results emerging from various sciences, such as history, linguistics, sociology, political sciences, law and philosophy, so that the past and present profiles of Romania are better understood by all those interested.

Key-Concepts of Romanian History. Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages contributes to the study of Romanian history by the description and analysis of selected terms, notions, concepts and languages from legal, political, historiographical, literary and sociological texts. We have chosen to focus on such texts because they have been the major means through which people's access to the ideas and messages

that have dominated Romanian political thought in modern and contemporary times has widened. The contextualization of the phenomena under analysis has facilitated the production of provocative working-hypotheses, new interpretations and conclusions. Recommendations for the re-semanticization of a number of concepts—whenever the authors considered these as a welcome contribution to present-day communitarian-civic aspirations—constitute the pragmatic side of the studies. The general theory of conceptual history is combined with case studies so that the essays in this volume account for the high significance of a Romanian *Begriffsgeschichte* on one hand, and demonstrate how de-mythicization makes possible the objective understanding of the past on the other.

Agreeing that *Begriffsgeschichte* has made a worldwide career thanks to the originality of Reinhart Koselleck's oeuvre, the contributors to this volume have gone one step further by pointing out the specifics of former communist states from Central and South-Eastern Europe. In view of revealing the hidden political meanings of concepts, they realized that this region of Europe has been characterized by a different socio-political context; that its cultures and languages evolved differently in comparison to Western-European ones.

The studies published in this volume highlight the unknown or mostly ideologized sides of modern Romanian politics. They accurately point out the ways Romanian national consciousness and the Romanian state were formed, the cultural and social gaps separating them from the West, as well as what has been done to the benefit of Romania's Europeanization since 1859. In this sense, reference to the fundamental notions and concepts that have played a significant role in the formation of Romanian mainstream political thought has been paramount. The results presented in what follows do not claim to be conclusive: rather, they offer a credible image of Romanian modernity and promote openness towards an alternative academic approach, one which is both theoretical and practical, both multi- and interdisciplinary. Such a history is addressed to a reader interested in Romanian culture, politics, society and mentality, eager to acquire new information and learn more about the country's national past.

The publication of this volume has been made possible thanks to the excellent cooperation among all the contributors who have eagerly agreed to follow a common goal and employ a similar methodology. We leave it to the reader to decide on the extent of our project's success or failure. We extend our thanks to the Volkswagen Foundation for the financial support in organizing the conference in Timișoara and for encouraging the publication of the present volume. We are indebted to the Polirom Publishing

House, especially to general manager Silviu Lupescu and publishing manager Adrian Șerban, whose initial eagerness and interest in our volume have resulted in an excellent collaboration. Our deep gratitude also goes to Ms. Valeska Bopp-Filimonov from the University of Aachen, who has significantly contributed to the organization of the conference, the mediation of German-Romanian scientific exchanges, and ensuring the necessary conditions for the publication of this volume. We are equally thankful to our colleague Sorin Antohi, who has understood the importance of our research and its possible impact on academic circles in Romania and closely contributed with extremely useful recommendations throughout the entire editorial process. We also thank Henriete Richer, a PhD candidate of the *“Reinhart Koselleck” International Doctoral School in Conceptual History*, for her assistance and cooperation in the elaboration of this volume.

Victor Neumann
Armin Heinen

Timișoara, Aachen
August 2012

Is Rewriting Romanian History Useful? The Evolution of Socio-Political Concepts and Alternative Interpretations

Victor Neumann

Scholarly publications of the last few decades prove that worldwide historiography has diversified its research tools and opted for fundamental methodological changes as far as approaching the past is concerned. Thanks to conjoined efforts on the part of historians, linguists, and philosophers, history has been significantly enriched and has gained a respectable status in the hierarchy of humanist sciences. Historians have become particularly drawn to interrogations, problematizations, and innovatory explanations. Their aim is not simply to narrate facts, but to comprehend them, to thoroughly investigate them and to ultimately formulate judgments of value. In order to be credible and persuasive, historical enquiry has to critically examine sources, objectively reflect upon them, honestly focus upon historical contexts, and employ adequate concepts and languages.

In this respect, an understanding of Romania's history in a European context requires a selection of the basic concepts to be used. The study of these concepts reveals how languages and mental reflexes have been formed. Many fundamental concepts are controversial in the Romanian milieu and thus they incite numerous debates, mostly on political topics. I have considered that specialists, and especially those who are not initiated in this field, would need a comprehensive explanation of these concepts in order to accurately understand them. Some key-concepts—such as those we have selected and presented in this volume—are meant to open research in this area in light of acknowledging the evolution of their meanings during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They clarify socio-political phrases of the past, and justify the aim of providing a methodological update to contemporary Romanian historiography. This is the case, for instance, for the concepts of *property*, *transition*, *Europe*, *politics*, *nation*,

national specificity, neam (Romanian for kin), totalitarianism, history, society, civil society, modernity, tradition, and constitution.

Key Concepts of Romanian History. Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages is a first-hand contribution to the process of updating the research methodology to be employed in the social and humanist sciences in Romania. Following the content of the studies from this volume, I am confident that a *Romanian conceptual history* can contribute to the understanding of socio-political languages in their evolution since the beginning of the modern era, as well as to the formulation of a working hypothesis concerning linguistic transformation. The future projects of Romania are closely linked, on the one hand, to a new way of interpreting history in the sense promoted by Reinhart Koselleck—that is, following the *future's past* (*Vergangene Zukunft*)—and on the other hand, to the need to re-negotiate the fundamental concepts so that Romanian socio-political phrases, and Romanian culture in general, can earn the chance of becoming convergent with the European scene.

Ever since the Enlightenment, history has been a dynamic field of study not only in regards to the acquisition of information, but especially as a necessary scholarly endeavor serving the need to unveil and define human thought and action.¹ In Reinhart Koselleck's words:

One cannot deduce the meaning of actual long-term practice which gradually changed from the documents proper. One needs to undertake a preliminary stage which is predominantly theoretical and terminological. What proves to be the case of a history of concepts refers one to a clearly delimited linguistic space and to an empirical practice only perceptible through the medium of language. This stands proof of innovatory impulses meant to sanction or initiate new experiences; however, these means do not yet fully justify the fact that this is history properly speaking.²

¹ Starting with the eighteenth century, the concept of *history* became distinct from that of literature, being associated with knowledge based upon research and science. More information on the evolution of the concept within modern socio-political languages can be found in Reinhart Koselleck, "Geschichte" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Vol. 2, 593-717.

² Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 29: "[...] was sich andererseits Begriffsgeschichtlich aufweisen lässt—am überlieferten Schriftgut—, das verweist uns zwar auf den sprachlich umgrenzten Erfahrungsraum und bezeugt innovative Vorstöße, die neue Erfahrungen registrieren oder initiieren mochten, aber der Rückschluss auf eine tatsächliche Geschichte ist damit noch nicht zullässig. Die Differenz zwischen Handeln und Reden, die wir für die sich vollziehende Geschichte aufgewiesen haben, sie verhindert auch im Blick zurück, dass die gesellschaftliche 'Wirklichkeit' jemals mit der Geschichte ihrer sprachlichen artikulation konvergiert."

Just as man is prone to freedom and to choosing among several options, so the historian's angle of reflection should always change. Using this observation as a point of departure, Hans-Georg Gadamer holds that language has an immense potential to indicate the determining factors of human behavior and self-assertion.³ Alongside language, it is history which evaluates the legacies of the past, invites to the contextualization of the duration of events, compares events and develops hypotheses in the hope of understanding what has already happened. Just as the concept of history "is not simply a fight over scientific methods, theories, and politics," so the theory of history is not just ideology, even if it suits ideological critiques given the ambivalences included in its own analyses and judgments.

The structure of thought in which an event of the past is framed becomes essential, and facilitates hierarchic differentiations, interpretations and conclusions. From hence derives the freedom to decode events and to write and rewrite a point of view. Not by chance, the latest generations of historians have been increasingly drawn to identifying markers of thought. Whether they refer to the slow transformation of society and economy *during the long periods of history*, as identified by Fernand Braudel, or to the *discontinuities* one can trace within socio-political languages, as Reinhart Koselleck noted, questioning individual and social structures of thought is essential to the historian's work.

Under the Sign of Prejudices and Naive Telling: The Case of Histories from Former Communist Countries

Starting a discussion about the new look of worldwide historiography is worthwhile given that the study of the past in former communist countries is still dominated by ideological, political, and religious partisan views which are characterized by the use and abuse of descriptions abounding in ethnic, nationalist, fundamentalist prejudices and inventing at every step a "class" or "race" enemy. Such is, for instance, the case in dichotomies like Romanian/Hungarian, Romanian/Roma, Orthodox/Greek-Catholic, Christian/Jewish, communist/anti-communist, rich/poor, and educated/ignorant, which are part of the Romanian historical discourse and prevent the understanding of the complex and convoluted regional and national histories within Romania. Given the modest or unconvincing knowledge of the

³ H.G. Gadamer, "Historik und Sprache" in Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 119–27; cf. 126.

other—of the existence on one and the same territory of several cultural-linguistic communities that have cooperated in the construction of the region's civilization—the historian's view is limited.

Talking about the history of a region by either ignoring cultural-linguistic and religious diversities or by extrapolating differences prevents the recuperation and development of a commonly shared history. Especially when historical writing bears the imprint of a strongly-felt response to either the mainstream communities' ethno-nationalism or the minorities' fears to assimilate, historians are left with too little time to reflect on the similarities between human aspirations, the European origins of a local civilization, or the older and newer legal meanings of the concept of citizen. Instead of offering elaborate studies to the benefit of the rational understanding of traits of thoughts characteristic to a particular set of values, many historians are still committed to the analysis of origin-based specificities; they continue to evaluate the past in relation to archetypes, genealogies, demographics, contradictions and wars or in the name of complexes of inferiority or superiority.

To give an example, social phenomena as well as multicultural and multi-civilizational strata from various periods of time are usually described in light of the same ethno-cultural ideology, thanks to which the theory of the ethno-nation has been uncovered and prolonged.⁴ Following this logic, historians only select those pieces of information that indicate a quasi-perfect cultural and religious continuity of the population. At other times, figures are meant to probe a demographic dynamics in accordance with the researcher's own beliefs and prejudices. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to separate fiction from reality, to distinguish

⁴ The concept of *interculturality*, in the usage prescribed to it by many Romanian historians, sociologists, ethnographers and philologists, has an assimilationist meaning according to which cultural-linguistic minorities always benefit from the mainstream's tolerance, interest and inter-civilizational exchange of values. Yet, most of the time researchers have completely insufficient (if non-existent) knowledge about the language and religion characterizing the communities they focus upon. This can be deduced from the documentary sources they cite, from the bibliography they employ, from the way they construct their interviews, as well as from the obsessive invocation of old and new statistics which have been carried out by the state to answer a political agenda or by the administrative forms that preceded it. Even if in many cases we commend the authors' good intentions and their merit to have contributed to the familiarization of the Romanian reader to the histories and cultures of minority groups, given the absence of a method involving the clarification of concepts, their studies continue to be dominated by an ideological load which questions the credibility and utility of their endeavors in view of renewing the benchmarks of the thought of the majority.

between history and memory, or to focus upon the constant changes that occur and the cyclical genesis of the new. Or, access to historical facts precisely depends upon drawing such distinctions.⁵ Temporal layers lead to different, if not opposed, meanings. In modern Europe, collective identity was redefined thanks to political changes or changed spheres of influence. In comparison to the previous historical times, society was structured differently in modern Europe, while languages and their messages also became different.

The concept of political identity, as formulated in the *Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights* from 1789, gave center stage to each individual's administrative and legal belonging. At least in theory, the concept did not refer to legal, religious or community-based differences among the people or groups of people within a state. Following many controversies that occurred during the process of emancipation and in the aftermath of its re-semanticization by legal culture, the concept hindered the construction and labeling of an individual on the basis of fortune, name, faith, language, or cultural orientation. Consequently, both political thought and democracy became richer. Therefore, the states of Western Europe—especially Great Britain and Switzerland—have for long implemented the co-habitation of several cultural-religious groups. With the passage of time, the concept of citizenship in these regions has been increasingly associated with numerous normative aspects which have helped these states become productive in view of socio-political stability.

In Central and South-Eastern Europe, the concept of citizen has had a much lower profile; the region's cultures and their communitarian ideological offshoots (which were largely determined by post-World War I Anglo-American and French policies) imposed ethnicity as the determining factor in the definition of a person's identity. As a result, it was ethnicity that determined the individual's status and rights in the public life of the state.⁶ This might seem natural if we remember that the rural and not the urban milieu inspired socio-political languages in the above-mentioned region. What was the result? Twentieth-century psychology and discriminatory politics continued to extrapolate one's historical rights, abusively employing the concepts of *ethnicity* and *ethno-nation*. In light of this, since the topic of the day is that of the exclusion of such minorities as the Roma, historiography urgently needs to make significant reappraisals.

⁵ Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 257–58. In this sense, see a complex analysis of Koselleck's theory of history in Hoffmann, "Koselleck, Arendt," 212–36, particularly 215.

⁶ Neumann, "The Concept of Nation in the Romanian Culture," 153–77.

How could one interpret comments according to which exclusivism is contained in the traditional concept of *citizen*, and not in that of *ethnicity*?⁷ A discussion of Western innovations to the concept of *citizen*—especially the radical reappraisal of the term in an intellectual milieu and a legal-administrative frame which deferred by almost two hundred years its introduction in their specific languages—primarily asks for an initial analysis of the discrepancies characterizing the legal and political status of the continent's two regions, the East and the West. The literature resulting from the study of a different universe and based upon another life experience, such as that of Will Kymlicka, requires not only the need to draw a correct inventory of its notions and hypotheses, but also the necessity to conduct a critical-rational examination of it if one intends to transfer theories generated in a different socio-cultural and political context to a new location (for example Romania).⁸

Regardless of the evident progress and recent political affiliations forged by states from Central and South-Eastern Europe within the European Union, we have to heed the facts. The slightly utopian estimations and the good intentions of some frontline scholars of international historiography regarding the process of the East's integration into the EU, such as those of Maria Todorova, cannot hope to sustain a different truth.⁹ So much more cautious must be the steps historians take to conceptualize multiculturalism, given that citizenship did not make a career in Central and South-Eastern Europe since in most cases national consciousness was forged in the absence of civism.¹⁰ That is why, for the time being, a discussion about the liberal sense of the concept of *citizen* is irrelevant. These are reasons for which historians must admit that in the study of history it is essential to distinguish between reality and imagination.

⁷ See Salát, *Multiculturalismul liberal*, 305.

⁸ Ibid. This happens even if the author is a scholar deeply involved with the multicultural phenomenon. At the same time, Western scholars themselves sometimes fail to focus upon those aspects that can define the specifics of the Central and South-Eastern European humanity.

⁹ Todorova, "Zukunft der Zivilgesellschaft in Europa," roundtable bearing the same title, chaired by Maria Todorova, Warsaw University, organized in collaboration with the Volkswagen Foundation, 18 June 2010.

¹⁰ See Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*.

Why Is It Useful to Define Concepts?

In Western cultures, medieval identity traits—structured by tribal marks—disappeared or were reconfigured as soon as the cosmopolitan ideas of the Enlightenment multiplied. New identity meanings were born out of old humanist creations due to the process of state reformation and its delimitation from Churches and the legislation and administration of previous centuries. Scientific development, geographic discoveries and technical progress fostered an alternative type of thought and a new way of being which did not exclude religious faith but stimulated instead freedom of conscience. Koselleck associated Enlightenment philosophy with masonic lodges in which “secret freedom became the secret of freedom” as a consequence of the norms of dialogue.

Citing *Kritik und Krise*,¹¹ an exegete of Koselleck’s oeuvre held that the above assertion refers to the separation of political authority from moral authority which occurred around the French Revolution. He also claimed that masonic lodges epitomized moral critique in social locations beyond the stately body, and “dangerously dissociated themselves from the specific field of politics,” leading to the generalized crisis at the end of the eighteenth century.¹² In the context of social emancipation, the Freemasons’ aspirations must be understood differently. This organization represented the main heir to and transmitter of Antiquity and Renaissance spiritual revelations. At the same time, it stimulated and protected intellectual creations, formulated the time’s main questions, and hence contributed to the genesis of a critical-rational type of thought based upon sciences and the idea of emancipation from medieval servitudes.

Not only did Freemasonry refuse to dissociate itself from politics; its movements essentially contributed to the development of science and political philosophy. The very concept of *Freemasonry* is fabulous, even though it is true that it points to a complicated issue which is often absent from humanist studies of transitions to modernity. Examining the vocabulary that assimilates such a concept and thereby explains the meanings of languages will be able to shed light upon the ideals held by intellectuals who were part of secret societies, as well as upon the confusion that took hold of the individual once these ideals were contradicted by the collectivist ideology which could be primarily defined by histori-

¹¹ Cf. Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*.

¹² Hoffmann, “Koselleck, Arendt.”

cal seniority.¹³ I have studied this latter aspect—with colossal implications in the century of extremes—from various angles and with different arguments each time,¹⁴ suggesting new directions of research by means of the history of concepts and conceptual history. I consider that decoding the concepts which have made possible the definition of collective identity by exclusion in societies and states such as Romania, is more than a topic that should be circumscribed to a specific locale. I see it as a part of European conceptual history on whose margins both Romanian and Western historians should reflect. In addition, the transnational approach to identities in the states of Central and South-Eastern Europe is a postmodern working method which enriches Reinhart Koselleck's findings and contributes to a more complex theorization of the history of Europe. In this way, we will perhaps manage to identify Europe's commonly shared identity politics so that the European Union will be able to find the pragmatic ideas and solutions necessary to bring to life the supra-state construction of the future.

Even if the region in which Romanian-language culture and the Romanian state have been structured does not always share similarities with the West, the present-day historian will have to make an effort and present the past that occurred during the above-mentioned process of modern becoming with the help of universal scientific tools. The renewal of thought is ever more important, since obstacles to the analysis and objective narration of the past come from the side of political parties and economic organizations which have constructed their myths of superiority via references to the unreformed values of the past. Koselleck believes that at certain times educated milieus affirmed themselves by means of the exclusivist ideology specific to patriotism: "The barriers that used to be raised in the past out of patriotic feeling and in the name of patriotism, behind which units of political action or economic organizations constructed the myth of their own superiority and innocence, are redefined on another scale but they are not eliminated. The hereditary exclusivism of patriotism is omnipresent, multiplying itself in the various forms of patriotism."¹⁵ This precise aspect

¹³ More details on the process of adopting and understanding the meanings of the Freemasons' new languages in the Ages of Enlightenment and state formation can be found in Neumann, "Francmasoneria speculativă în Europa luminilor", *Orizont*, no. 5, 2010: 22–3.

¹⁴ Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, Neumann, *Essays on Romanian Intellectual History*.

¹⁵ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 239: "Die ehemals patriotisch legitimierten oder als nationalistisch definierten Sperren, hinter denen sich die politischen Handlungseinheiten oder ökonomische Verbände ihrer eigenen Überlegenheit—oder gar ihrer Unschuld—

becomes essential when discussing the reform of both Romanian historiography and the socio-political languages characteristic of contemporary Romania.

There have been successive generations of historians who have related Romania's past to either their life experiences alone or to romantic stories. They have merely managed to promote a naïve or sentimental narration of the documents' contents. Quite a few examples prove that, under the pretext of teaching the facts of the recent past, the written history from former communist countries often sanctions the obsessions of the authors and their intellectual milieus, or they record the society's state of mind when confronted with the fluidity of intellectual, political and economic ideas. Such attitudes can be easier understood if we consider that over five hundred book titles have been published in reference to the events of 1989. With few exceptions, they pretend to be "true histories" of the events. Starting from oral testimonies and, to a lesser degree, if at all, from written sources, these publications present the most strained moments marking the end of 1989.

The same "histories" are interested in communism and in how the totalitarian state led by Nicolae Ceaușescu came to an end. They vaguely discuss the causes or the socio-economic and political aspects that generated people's discontent, favoring instead a *post factum* anti-communist dispute. They invoke Romanians' loose adherence to the communist regime by invoking traditions without explaining, however, the genesis and constant presence of conservative or anti-modernist ideologies in Romanian intellectual-political milieus ever since the nineteenth century. They do not discuss the absence of civism and of a minimal political culture on the part of the great mass of the population. Instead they enumerate the external factors that contributed to the establishment and conservation of communist totalitarianism for five decades. Furthermore, they do not consider the domestic social context which favored a dependence on the power structure, namely the absence of ideals concerning citizens' individual freedom; they do not investigate the small number of co-habitation norms or the predisposition of a majority of the population to cooperate with totalitarian regimes, just as they fail to notice the consequences of cultivating discrepancies between the elites and the masses. They are hardly aware of the meaning of a Ceaușescu-drawn protochronism which

versicherten, werden umbenannt und in anderen Größenordnungen neu errichtet, mitnichten beseitigt. Die einander ausschliessenden Erbteile des Patriotismus, pluralisiert in zahllosen patriotismen, sind weltumspannend allgegenwärtig."

generated ideology to the benefit of a totalitarian politics and thereby had specific characteristics in comparison to the other communist states, just as they are hardly aware of its kinship to the interwar right-wing doctrine inspired by Nae Ionescu and his followers.¹⁶

All in all, studies on the events that led to political change in 1989 Romania fail to show an interest in understanding the reasons for the absence of a real Romanian dissidence, be it intellectual or civic. They do not tackle this essential aspect; nor are they prone to remark, by contrast, the anti-communist and anti-totalitarian opposition from Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia which started to draw the contours of an alternative type of political thought from the 1950s and 1960s onwards.¹⁷ With only a few exceptions, the hundreds of Romanian studies on the year 1989 merely pay tribute to the authors' fantasies and have not received the necessary correction on the part of scientific historiography, whose representatives have been late in redefining their stand.¹⁸ The same absence of a necessary correction also characterizes a significant number of historical studies describing the centuries of early modernity. They should have been far more independent of the identity-political constraints of the present. In fact, we hope that historians will soon and more accurately understand that at present there are new, different topics and novel criteria of selecting them, that there are new and different interpretations of various eras, novel reflections on the anthropological conditions of a human being's acts, as well as different tools in point of the historian's languages and methods of scientific critique. I would also add that in the case of most studies of the type mentioned above, there is a lack of any rigorous demonstration and an absence of any attempt to decode or re-semanticize important concepts such as *revolution*, *progress*, *property*, *neam* (Romanian for *kin*), *state*, *nation*, *specificity*, *legionarism*, *fascism*, *communism*, *totalitarianism*, and *transition*.¹⁹

¹⁶ See Balázs Trencsényi's study in this volume, "The Conceptualization of National Character in the Romanian Intellectual Tradition."

¹⁷ Neumann, "National Political Cultures and Regime Changes," 228–47.

¹⁸ On the importance to redefine one's stand, see Neumann, "Istoria conceptuală și deconstrucția limbajelor social-politice," 179–91.

¹⁹ The most striking examples of reader manipulation can be found in the works of Alex Mihai Stoenescu who takes advantage of the audience's low level of knowledge, the small number of existent historical-critical analyses, and the commercial appetite of certain publishing houses. See A. M. Stoenescu, *Istoria loviturilor de stat în România*, vol. 4, *Revoluția din decembrie 1989 – o tragedie românească*, see Bogdan Murgescu's review of *Revoluția Română din 1989*, 205–12.

Consequently, studies that should offer a critical-rational approach usually abound in unnecessary details and give rise to quite a few confusions. Consider only one definition of the concept of *revolution* by a strongly marketed author in post-Ceaușescu Romania, whose books have benefited from very large circulation figures and nation-wide distribution:

A *reform* occurs the moment when, despite his entire divine legitimacy, the blood heir of a noble title accepts to no longer be the privileged intermediary between God and the people; once he is further replaced in this position by any trained (initiated) citizen, we have a *revolution*. More precisely: this moment represents the very core of a revolution, its imperceptible and exclusively ideatic beginning.²⁰

Hence follows a theory of conspiracy, according to which the revolution would be the product of trained/initiated individuals who by occult means take over from the nobility the new role of master.

In his preliminary considerations on the history of the concept of *revolution*, Koselleck notes that in its present-day use and meaning, the concept is inspired by the senses attributed to it by the French Revolution.²¹ First of all, “[the concept] refers to people’s anxieties expressed through a revolt that associates itself with violence and can turn into a civil war.” Secondly, it identifies “the change of the constitution,” “a transformation of structure which goes from the past towards the future,” in which case its meaning is that of permanent change.²² Finally, in close connection to politics, “it suggests violence, refers to the whole society, and can contain numerous fields, such as industry, science, culture.”²³ This is a complex concept which describes a sudden short-term or long-term political change and which presupposes a particular social context. “The historical context clarifies the political aim and, reversely, the political aim opens up the historical dimension. Additionally, the concept refers to both a leader and a counselor for action. It is this particular feature which constitutes its modernity.”²⁴

In light of this, it becomes obvious why the above-mentioned quote by Romanian author Alex Mihai Stoenescu deserves further clarification. Alongside the universally valid meanings of the concept of *revolution*,

²⁰ Stoenescu, *Istoria loviturilor*, 376.

²¹ Koselleck, “Revolution. Rebellion, Aufruhr, Bürgerkrieg,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 5, 653–788.

²² *Ibid.*, 653.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

one also needs to take into consideration the specifics of language and culture so that the historian's judgment of value will be based on an implicit knowledge of the social status, the type of a state's administrative organization and the level of political awareness characterizing the event under analysis. Our example does not refer to either the universal meaning of the concept or to a serious evaluation of its national signification. Instead, the author's evaluation is limited by the invocation of political unrest, which could at best suggest that the 1989 revolution has not yet finished. Why is it that the meaning of the concept plays a role in defining what happened? I return to Koselleck, since he relevantly drew attention to the fact that "each revolution which has violently changed power relations has led to the establishment of new power relations. Albeit legitimacy may be new and legal powers different, even better, what does not change at all is the top-bottom character of relations; finally, there is simply a return to forms of dependency that are legally reorganized and regulated."²⁵

The vague definition of the concept of *revolution* has prevented not only a well-balanced evaluation of the events from our recent past, but also of those from 1784 (Horea's uprising), 1821 (Tudor Vladimirescu's revolt), 1848 (the 1848 revolt/revolutionary movement/civil war), 1907 (the great peasant revolt from Romania's Old Kingdom), 1944 (liberation from Ion Antonescu's fascist dictatorship), etc. In investigating these periods, the use of a mere approximate semantics of the same concepts has delayed the possibility to decode the reasons behind Romania's countless processes of transition towards modernity. The wide array of meanings given by Romanian historiography to this concept—as well as to those invoked above, which are closely related to this particular one—indicates, for the time being, the indifference of most historians to using rigorous methods and the theoretical comprehension of events. Hence springs the slow pace characterizing the progress of knowledge for humanist disciplines which have been confiscated by politics or trending ideologies. In this respect, a particularly relevant observation by Bogdan Murgescu in-

²⁵ Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 109: "Jede Revolution, die aufgewaltsame Weise Gewaltverhältnisse geändert hat, führt zur Etablierung neuer Gewaltverhältnisse. Die Legitimation mag neu sein, die Rechtsverhältnisse mögen andere, vielleicht sogar bessere geworden sein, an der Wiederkehr von neu organisierten und rechtlich geregelten Abhängigkeitsformen, an der Oben-Unten-Relation selber ist deshalb noch nie etwas geändert worden. Selbst eine Vereinbarung unter Gleichen setzt politische Gewalt ein, um die Relationen zu stabilisieren." Also see Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann's pertinent observations and comments in "Koselleck, Arendt...", 221.

vites a much-needed reflection on the margin of writings such as those I have already mentioned:

The author's [Alex Mihai Stoenescu's] descriptive talent and efforts towards documentation are undermined by the high degree of freedom he takes upon himself as to the rigors of scientific research and the devotion towards holding pre-established theses no matter what. [...] Consequently, Stoenescu's book fails to become a reference book of history and remains an exemplary sample of ideological discourse about the revolution.²⁶

Such types of writings actually reveal a truth about a significant part of Romanian historiography which is worth mentioning: its tendency to continue endorsing a romantic view of Romanian history, an approach which is opposed to critical analysis, methodological renewal, and conceptual progress, and which is not willing to tear itself away from past structures of thought and promote, instead, Western norms.

Specifics of Eastern Europe

Can the thesis be true according to which the Eastern half of Europe has had the darkest history? If so, how can one explain the tragedies that have occurred in that region? Is it necessary to comparatively assess the number of victims in view of a better understanding of history? Are the regions of the East more prone to totalitarian regimes than those of the West? In that case, how should one interpret Western influences on the East of Europe, or, more precisely, what are the cultural and identity similarities and differences between the two zones of the continent? Is it right to rewrite the modern history of Europe from the perspective of the atrocities that were perpetrated in the middle of the twentieth century?

Such questions about the past persist in many people's minds. Even if there is a high degree of curiosity for the recent past in each of the former communist countries—where historians, politicians and journalists have collected archival information, published journals, collections of documents, essays, and monographs, and have institutionalized their activities—, the political class does not seem to be convinced of the importance of having lively debates on serious political errors. Historians still depend upon either archival documents or prejudices influencing their research. It should be so because any totalitarian system is interested, on the one

²⁶ Murgescu, *Revoluția Română din 1989*, 212.

hand, in keeping secret its own projects, and on the other, in manipulating society by the falsification of information. Under these circumstances, reality may develop its own partisanship, opposing power and the lack of power, the new and the old, progress and regress, political language and scientific language.

According to François Furet, it is imperative to distinguish between *traditional history* and *history remodeled by social sciences*. Using as an example the study of the 1789 French Revolution, he shows that narrative history substitutes the social meaning of an event by the political one and fetishizes documents.²⁷ In his critical analysis of Richard Cobb's oeuvre, Furet notes that the presentation of history on aesthetic or moral grounds limits the number of possible themes to be considered and is detrimental to the very wit of history. The idea according to which the historian restitutes the past starting from the documents is an absurd ambition or, at best, it proves the author's literary talent thanks to which he sensibly rewrites the content of the sources. However, documents are not always credible; they do not always warrant an accurate description of the past. In this sense, Koselleck warned about the importance of selection, fully aware that even though documents can probe new experiences, they do not always represent a "serious index of history properly speaking."²⁸

If we choose to renew the discourse about the past in former communist countries and remodel it through the study of language, concepts, ideas and society, we have the chance to develop a science which will distance itself from the obtuse ideologies that stimulated the imagination of dictators and their totalitarian regimes. The study of concepts is a method whereby we not only decode the social and political functions of language, but through which we make the historical evolution of society our object of reflection. Changes also depend on the historian's *chutzpah* to question national histories so that, jointly with the reader, he can be able to decode simplifying myths and overcome the tyranny of the past. The studies in this volume invite to such a scholarly endeavor, their aim being to rewrite Romanian history and to intellectually reconstruct the citizen by foregrounding the benefits of scientific-rational thought.

²⁷ Furet, *L'atelier de l'histoire*, 30.

²⁸ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 29: "Und was sich andererseits begriffsgeschichtlich aufweisen läßt—am überlieferten Schriftgut—, das verweist uns zwar auf den sprachlich umgrenzten Erfahrungsraum und bezeugt innovative Vorstöße, die neue Erfahrungen registrieren oder initiieren mochten, aber der Rückschluß auf eine tatsächliche Geschichte ist damit noch nicht zulässig."

Why an Alternative History?

In the collective imaginary, the notions/concepts which sustain marginalization or exclusion have hardly changed, if at all. Real events are not considered of interest as long as they lack an ideological engagement; hence result dangerous interpretive distortions, half-truths presented as definitive verdicts, and ultimately the falsification of history. The example of dogmatic controversies over alternative school textbooks of Romanian history points to radically conservative options. This is due to school curricula, an old-fashioned educational system, as well as to cultural and political elites who have preferred to prolong old structures of thought in post-communist times rather than make authentic reforms, using the old cultural-identity paradigm instead of alternative languages, and “forms without substance” instead of European pragmatism.

How else could we see things when ministries of education promote university curricula and recommend bibliographies filled with out-of-date information and theories, with notions and concepts with nineteenth-century meanings, or when they define collective/political identity by conjoining the ethnic with the national? How could we label socio-political languages which ignore the fundamental concepts of democracy such as *decentralization* and *local and regional autonomy*? How could we assess the contradictions surrounding the process of Romania’s European integration when we notice that the meanings of the concept of *Europe* (as they are acknowledged by Western cultures) are so much distorted that neither schools nor the media can correct their false connotations?²⁹

A national history which claims to know how to orient its own citizens is expected to also know how to connect local/regional themes with European and universal ones. One also expects such a history to be animated by the desire to go beyond a binary-type of thought which uses parallel histories and conflicting ideologies. That is why the new understanding of history—the one which results from rewriting it on the grounds of scientific accumulation and the intellectual might of the contemporary world—will be made

²⁹ The structure of thought in which a past event is framed becomes paramount; on its basis, one can create hierarchies, offer interpretations and conclusions. The freedom to decode an event and formulate a point of view is due to the very structure of thought. The most recent generations of historians have been drawn to identifying the intellectual benchmarks in the formation of thought. Whether we refer to the slow transformation of society and economy during the long eras of history—as Fernand Braudel believed—or to the discontinuities that constitute socio-political languages—as identified by Reinhart Koselleck—it is essential for the historian’s work to question structures of thought.

possible by the re-semanticization of concepts, among other things. Social polarizations and the will to relocate the rapports among various cultural-linguistic and religious groups asks for a reconstruction of languages and the acquisition of a *sensus communis*, a commonly shared meaning useful in view of social, multicultural and multi-religious co-habitation.

In this sense, the episode in which the mayor of the seacoast city of Constanța wears a Nazi officer uniform and marches like SS troops for a fashion show either indicates the absence of a minimum of cultural-historical and doctrinarian benchmarks, or a voluntary contamination with extreme ideologies. Either way, this case involves a politician's lack of responsibility before his electors, as well as his instinctual desire to hold the reins of power in the simple Nazi-like way.³⁰ "At best imaginable in the palace of some African dictator," the above-mentioned slippage was quickly criticized by the Western press. When discussing twentieth-century totalitarianisms,³¹ we should keep in mind that Central and South-East European experiences have been and continue to be different in comparison to those from Western Europe. The short-lived tradition of democracy in the East of Europe, and its often debatable results, can be explained by the ignorance of the masses, the continuity of the romantic idea of the nation and the ethno-national state,³² and the replacement of the politics of social integration with a discriminatory attitude, with reflexes of intolerance to any difference.

In order to understand the above observation, it is worthwhile noting that some Romanian press makers have returned to chauvinist, anti-Semitic and racist messages drawn upon a legionary orientation. Some widely mediatized journalists often write or talk in a fascist manner, resuming the ideology of the most popular segment of interwar Romanian elites. Thus, in his article "România cu lanțul de gât" ("Neck-Noosed Romania"), a well-known news presenter from the ProTV and Antena 2 television stations reflects as follows on the national question and a possible way out:

³⁰ See Armin Heinen's study in this volume, "Images of Europe – Images of Romania (1945/1948–2008)." Heinen therein identifies several stages characterizing the rapprochement and distancing between Romania and Europe in the post-World War II era, and he proposes the analysis of three dimensions, "the political sphere, intellectuals' reactions and the anchoring of everyday history to a symbolical geography."

³¹ T. Gallagher, "România – un loc golit de valori" [Romania. A value-dumping place], *România Liberă*, 27 July 2009.

³² See Neumann's study in this volume, "The Concept of Totalitarianism in Romanian Socio-Political Languages."

The neck-noose is golden, though we no longer know for sure what and whose Romania is. Demographic figures have suddenly changed, like a storm coming out of the blue. We are under occupation albeit no army is in sight. We are colonized by a quarrelsome and callous population which has arrived here from no steppe and has been brought here by no plane. It is a population which has evolved inside the national body, as Alien's fetuses. [...] It looks like someone has secretly let loose a wave of human mud which little by little swells over the nation of Sadoveanu, Eliade or Nichita. [...] Just a few days ago, in Craiova, I saw this New Romania parading, I saw Mafia triumphing as a harness to Kayak's coffin, paying eternal respect to a life of crime and bleeding muscles. Those people who were giving orders to the police prepared their final strike before getting hold of official power, after having already taken over symbolic power: we listen to their music, we remold our benchmarks following their values, and we are run over by their cars. Far away, the European Union and trending political correctness teach us to be thankful and wipe our mouth. We used to be a nation, now we are becoming an amalgam of tribes.³³

Is this manner of seeing the Romanian social scene the result of family-run or school-run education? Does it signal the return to extremist ideas? Does it involve the journalist's old attachment to metaphors likely to generate trivial languages and no actual knowledge of the meaning of terms and, hence, a serious error in interpretation? To what kind of democratic values can such a propaganda-oriented society aspire? This is a very serious issue once we understand that the article's message refers to an invented enemy, to the theory of the scapegoat. According to the author, the nation belongs to the elites, not to the state's citizens; it belongs to writers who have gained renown, not to the various social classes. The absence of criteria defining the collective, administrative-political identity is as dangerous as the lack of an individual consciousness.

Facts are distorted, as transpires from the fact that the above-quoted author is an adept of an aberrational social polarization which is quasi-identical with the one of Romania's Old Kingdom around 1900. In addition, he draws inspiration from the continuous (open or hidden) conflict between the elites and the masses, between the mainstream and the minorities, between the educated ("the smart ones") and the less educated ("the stupid ones"). Messages from the article "România cu lanțul de gât" prove their allegiance to the 1930–1940 legionary orientation. This is yet another reason why we have to acknowledge the importance of the re-semanticization of notions and concepts in agreement with those val-

³³ Mândruță, "România cu lanțul de gât," 4 September 2008. The article was republished in *New York Magazine*, no. 629, 2009, 9.

ues that populate European languages and cultures. This endeavor may offer an opportunity to stop blaming political correctness when the debate is centered upon a society which has not yet stated its own existential norms.

In what regards to history as a fundamental cultural benchmark for the formation of the individual, it must leave behind the uneven path carved by ambiguous notions overcharged with deeply partisan messages, such as fate, genius, eternity, a people of masters, national self-determination, Satan, *historia magistra vitae*, history as divine providence, etc. Why? In this way, history will avoid using manipulations like those belonging to dictators. "Only under the hammer of world history can the eternal values of a people become the steel and iron that make history," wrote Hitler in one of his books.³⁴ "The Germans have helped us to regain Bessarabia and Bukovina, to arm ourselves, to start delousing the country from its internal enemies, the Jews, which we have considered to be more toxic than the external ones as the latter could determine the disintegration of the country, while the internal ones could poison and corrupt the soul of the people"³⁵—as asserted by Antonescu in an interview dated March 5, 1943.

We still need to address, among other things, the questions regarding the formation of the new generations and the criteria in whose name cultural products and the educational process facilitate change in mental reflexes. Secondly, it is essential to give up using parallel languages when it comes to the history of cultural-linguistic and religious minority and mainstream communities. Thirdly, in a pluri-lingual Europe, communication is relevant, but even more relevant is embracing a set of communitarian values. In many of the Central and South-Eastern European states, languages continue to be infested by the legacies of totalitarian regimes. These countries' references to cultural and religious minorities are polemical in relation to the EU legislation; this represents an important clue about the population's structure of thought. Chauvinist, anti-Rroma and anti-Semitic slogans feed propaganda as well as extremist attitudes.³⁶ The return to ethno-nationalism not only proves the "original character" of Romanian democracy, which fails to cultivate a community's welfare or an authentic social-democratic doctrine, but also the temptation to mo-

³⁴ Cited by Koselleck, "Geschichte", 714.

³⁵ Cited by Lya Benjamin, *Evreii din România între anii 1940–1944*, Vol. II, document 160, 501–2.

³⁶ See, for instance, the meaning ascribed to co-habitation with Rromas in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania.

nopolize (under various pretexts) and to preserve the political discourse inherited from predecessors. A pre-modern nineteenth-century orientation of Romanians—acutely present on the local level—confronts the normative supra-state meaning of the European Union.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the modernization of Central and South-Eastern Europe was lagging far behind that of the Western world. Later, two totalitarian regimes—fascism and national-communism—found it easy to freely establish and manifest themselves in the region, untroubled by the existence of an intellectual critique and a civic attitude. Despite the efforts of a social layer emancipated from obtuse ideologies, the endorsement of a multi-party system and the borrowing of democratic laws and their specific languages were not enough to uproot totalitarian-like behaviors in states like Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, or Hungary.

The study of history must take into consideration not only the narration of facts or the invocation of statistical data as representing the sole testimonies to what happened; it must also consider the evolution of the language and the cultural and political thought characterizing a particular location. A thoughtful comparison of figures, as that by Timothy Snyder from the *New York Review of Books* of 16 July 2009, must be accompanied by thorough reflection on individuals, the baggage of knowledge assimilated in family and school, and especially on the attempt to find answers to difficult questions concerning the behavior of leaders and the masses before these take up certain decisions or political actions. Many questions need to be addressed before statistics dare proclaim verdicts: What are the intellectual sources which have favored the degradation of the human species during the “century of extremes”? Who invented the concept of *enemy*, when, to what aim? What is to be understood by expressions such as *race enemy* and *class enemy* and in what kind of political contexts are they likely to multiply and become the main weapons serving propaganda? Who becomes an *enemy* in times of war and what is the role of activating prejudices thanks to this concept? What does the notional pair *we-you* try to suggest or regulate? Who does *we* represent and who does *you* represent when one speaks of one and the same national society?³⁷

³⁷ In an article in *Dilema Veche*, no. 263/2009, entitled “Istoria de la povestire la problematizare” [The movement of history from story-telling to problematization], I showed that by failing to re-semanticize key-notions such as *revolution*, *totalitarianism*, *communism*, *bolshevism*, *legionarism*, *fascism*, *Nazism*, *state*, and *nation*, the authors of books

It is hard to find a satisfactory answer to these questions if one merely chooses to trace and localize the mass crimes carried out under Nazi or Soviet command. As to the geography of Central and South-Eastern Europe, it represents the infrastructure of history. I consider that the examination of the individual and the collective cultures which have generated mass crimes is a more adequate method for grasping the intimate resorts of totalitarian regimes and for understanding the evil they have produced. In this way we can also go beyond the political disputes among great powers in contemporary times.³⁸ As to the Supreme Evil of Auschwitz, or the factory of death, as it has been called, there is no term of comparison for it.

Yet, I consider helpful Snyder's comment that "memory has had eccentric deviations from history," which makes history more necessary than ever before. Central and South-Eastern Europe is at a crossroads stage where it needs to assume a different kind of knowledge as to its own history. This should not happen under just any circumstances, though; it needs to profit from the wealth of archival documents, the methodological gains and the effort of conceptualization, elements that one can use as research tools. What is at stake is not the invention of another national history, as attempted by dictatorial politics, but a rethinking of the same past events, facts, names, institutions and ideas. We must learn of the Holocaust and the Gulag via the legislations that have made possible such administrations; via their military actions, lagers and mass homicides; via the population's structure of thought and the elites' political culture; via reflexes which have affected radical actions. Critical analysis and problematization enrich one's knowledge and facilitate access to the experiences of the past.

Based on the above considerations, I see Romania standing at an essential crossroads, in need to distance itself from a history elaborated under the influence of the uniqueness doctrine, the so-called official history. Decoding fundamental concepts from the modern era and investigating their subsequent evolution are particularly useful for a thorough theoretical substantiation of the present and for the positive elaboration of future projects. When extended to areas such as language, literature, sociology and politology, studying the semantics of concepts significantly contributes to the identification of the traits of character that have been our leg-

on December 1989 have created a literature whose only secret is the attempt to recover the emotional load of that political moment.

³⁸ I do not think these disputes help to advance the progress of historical knowledge.

acy. Romanian culture urgently needs to apply this novel method since the fundamental concepts employed in its socio-political languages are alien to our time.³⁹

Renewing Historical Discourse. Romanian Fundamental Concepts

What is the use of deconstructing socio-political languages? Is there any relation between the fundamental concepts of a language and the variants of socio-political interpretation? What should we consider from the theory that results from conceptual history? Is conceptual history capable to better disclose the realities of modern, contemporary Romania? What are the key-concepts we should investigate in the first stage of using Romanian conceptual history as research method?

The end of World War II was followed by the reconceptualization of social and political events, of ideologies and languages from the great Western European states. For years on end, Germany, France and England focused on possible methods to approach history. Without disregarding the results of their predecessors, historians looked for alternative ways to their old approaches, finding *conceptual history* via *Begriffsgeschichte* as the means to rewrite national histories.

According to Koselleck, the history of concepts is a minimum condition for “redefining the world of history” and the linguistic reflection on social evolution.⁴⁰

No social activity, no political attitude, no economic exchange is possible without language, without the existence of a speaker and an addressee, without planning meetings, without public debates and secret gatherings, without order and obedience, without the consent of participants or disagreement on the part of people who are in conflict with one another. Any ordinary, everyday history that happens repetitively is dependent upon language in action and the act of speaking, just as no love story can be imagined without the presence of at least three words: I, you, and we.⁴¹

³⁹ See Neumann’s “Foreword” to the Program of the International Conference *Fundamental Concepts in Romanian Socio-Political Languages*, held in Timișoara between 23 and 26 September 2009. The conference was organized by the “Reinhart Koselleck” International School in Conceptual History within the University of West, Timișoara in cooperation with Aachen University; it was sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation and inspired by the work of historian Reinhart Koselleck.

⁴⁰ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 9.

⁴¹ Ibid., 14: “Keine gesellschaftliche Tätigkeit, keine politischen Handel und kein wirtschaftlicher Handel ist möglich ohne Rede und Antwort, ohne Planungsgespräch, ohne öffentliche Debatte oder geheime Aussprache, ohne Befehl—und Gehorsam—, ohne

Enriching research through the method of “conceptual history” contributes to the “de-mythization of the past.” In this case, analyses pay attention to the reflective and formative power of language. Similar to the case of Germany after 1945, it is important for Romania to create the premises for a pluralist political culture by means of language awareness.

The political discourse of Romania is marked by a flawed communication on the part of the elites; it is tributary to the culture of the monologue. Because of this, the deconstruction of concepts aims at drawing awareness to messages, and their re-semanticization stimulates the search for new representations of the collective identity. For instance, replacing the concept of *ethno-national*—whose origins lie in nineteenth-century *Völkerpsychologie*—by that of *a nation of citizens* would facilitate our ability to overcome communitarianist polarizations and the possibility to create a state entity which naturally accepts pluri-lingual, multicultural and multi-confessional co-habitation. *Conceptual history* aims to renew the possible approaches one might have to a historical entity by assuming an alternative cultural paradigm, namely by assuming political languages that are similar to those from the advanced societies of the European Union. Explaining the experiences from the past of Central and South-Eastern Europe by means of concepts represents one of the challenges we have chosen to address. Under the circumstances, we invite historians to come closer to the linguistic structure of texts and the messages contained therein so as to better grasp the communication happening among social and cultural groups living inside or outside Romania.

If Reinhart Koselleck focused on the linguistic shifts occurring during the German period of transition that lasted from 1750 to 1850, paying particular attention to concepts that reflected *modern thought* such as *Aufklärung* or *the Enlightenment* (seen as a cultural theory), *reform*, *progress*, *revolution*, *romanticism*, *idealism*, *privilege*, *freedom*, *future* etc.,⁴² the approach that I consider particularly useful for Romanian historiography and Romanian culture as a whole is one which investigates concepts that describe “identities” or representations of “civil society,” in their turn leading to the formation of political identities. Romania is a country in

Konsens der Beteiligten oder artikulierten Dissens sich streitender Parteien. Jede Alltagsgeschichte im täglichen Vollzug ist angewiesen auf Sprache in Aktion, auf Reden und Sprechen, so wie keine Liebesgeschichte denkbar ist ohne mindestens drei Worte—du, ich, wir.”

⁴² Cf. Brunner, Conze, Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. For the manner in which the historian interprets the evolution of notions function of historical time, see, for instance, Koselleck, “Fortschritt,” vol. 2, 353–423.

which modernization occurred as a top-bottom process, with impact on a limited number of social structures that represented a minority. Because of this, contradictions go hand in hand with what political thought and action express. Conceptual overlappings not only indicate delays in the process of transition from medieval to modern times, but also point to an incomplete modernization. On the one hand, our studies mean to reconsider and renew the approaches one might have to the history of Romania and the period of Romanian modernity, and on the other, they aim to problematize and instigate new reflections on linguistic shifts and transformations.

An important step for socio-humanist sciences and the formation of a cultural politics in present-day Romania might be the analysis of some fundamental historical concepts in the Romanian language and their comparison with similar ones in German. The influence of German culture on the Romanian space has been less foregrounded than the influence of French culture; this is one more reason why our studies are even more welcome and necessary, just as they are willing to uncover the cultural path/transfer (the interculturalism) of concepts such as *mother-country/motherland*, *constitution*, *property*, *progress*, *nation*, *Europe*, *politics*, and *political person*. Below are other reasons why we preferred to follow a Romanian-German cooperation and line of study:

- a) if French culture facilitated Romanians' reception of cultural-ideological models and political-administrative forms, German culture significantly influenced the Romanian perspective on group consciousness, namely the idea of a cultural nation based upon claims of sharing the same language, the same origins and the same historical continuity on the same territory;
- b) the reception of the Austrian *Aufklärung* and the Prussian "Sturm und Drang" by the intellectual milieus of Transylvania occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, while the transfer of their ideas to Wallachia and Moldavia took place during and after the events of the 1848 revolution;
- c) the German concepts regarding the state, nation and society were influential and played an important part in the development of Romanian thought in the nineteenth century. (In this sense, we could cite concepts such as: *continuity*, *culture*, *ethnicity*, *ethno-culture*, *cultural nation*, and *nation*);
- d) though we cannot ignore it, nineteenth-century German historiography is obsolete; consequently, we must note the renovations proposed by its postbellic schools, especially the major contribution of the Bielefeld

Circle around Reinhart Koselleck, who contributed to the enrichment and reorientation of the working methodology in similar terms with the suggestions coming from the School of Annales run by Marc Bloch, Lucien Lefebvre and Fernand Braudel;

- e) the openness offered by German interdisciplinary studies deserves special attention since they have managed to de-Nazify historical and political languages in the post-World War II era;
- f) without ignoring national values, and the need to relate to one's own past, conceptual history benefits from the pragmatism of the German method and is understood as a "European" relation to both the past and the future.

Conclusions

Many concepts are controversial in the Romanian space; hence, they provoke political disputes. Some of these concepts—the ones we have selected, framed and presented in this book—facilitate our ability to understand their meanings during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They clarify fragments from the past, motivating the necessity of methodological changes and the importance of rewriting the history of Romania. Representing a first research of this kind, and bearing a title which suggests the need for deep reformation, *The History of Romania through Concepts. Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages* may prove to be a praiseworthy contribution to historiography if it succeeds in enabling the establishment of a new and correct diagnosis of the problems characterizing Romania's modernity. On choosing to more accurately pin down the past by the mastery of notions and by the capacity for theorization, historical writings gain in nuances and clarity as well as in the ability to better explain and understand facts and the context of their occurrence. They enhance the meaning of the past's experiences in view of renewing science and culture and of having a visible, positive impact on society and politics. The evolution of linguistic norms and their renegotiation relativizes the discourse of the national past and, by that, it increases the chances for an authentic (and not merely formal) convergence between the values of Romania and Europe.

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On the Process of Writing the History of Romania: Methodological Issues

Armin Heinen

Conceptual History, Discourse History, Historical Semiotics or, Perhaps, Political Culture History?

Even if, thematically speaking, Romanian historiography has broadened its horizons, and contemporary Romanian history, in particular, has been the object of more in-depth analyses than in the past, Cristina and Dragoș Petrescu hold that, overall, post-1989 Romanian historiography has been less innovatory.¹ Romanian Studies have made a modest progress in point of scientific results. Rather than aspiring to methodological innovations, the post-1989 Romanian historical science has aimed to free itself from ideological assertions by letting the sources speak for themselves and try to discover the “truth.” “What actually happened?” (Rilke)—historians have formulated this question as a reaction to dictators’ previous immersion in how to approach the past. The return to positivist traditions, to historicism and to a classical history of politics has represented an opportunity for the established historians of the Ceaușescu era to finally be able to freely express themselves. Nevertheless, Romanian public debates were still pretty heated in the aftermath of the 1989 Revolution, so that history thematized itself under other forms than might have been expected. Innovative outsiders and young scholars started to speak up and to employ new Western-inspired working methods. In this sense, it is worthwhile noting the debates around Lucian Boia’s studies on the myths of Romanian history² and the debate around the school textbook of Romanian history ed-

¹ Petrescu and Petrescu, “Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past,” 311–408.

² Pop, *Istoria, adevărul și miturile*. See also Platon, “Despre istorie, adevăr și mituri. O replică d-lui Lucian Boia,” available online at <http://www.contrafort.md/2003/99/474.html> (last accessed 24. 01. 2010).

ited by Sorin Mitu.³ In both cases, the main questions were: How should we write history? Which are the facts and what should be the role of history for the present?

In what follows, I will present a few methodological considerations regarding the study and knowing of history. “Suprastructure” determines individual fate and—like serious economic events—it is historically significant; in Romania, it cannot be questioned given the socialist dictatorship that ruled on this territory. It proposes the understanding of the real as a “resistance force.” Meanwhile, having oftentimes been a subject of the power structure that can determine how the world is interpreted, the social field has had a long tradition and has been permanently reconfigured. Thought and speech thereby have become aspects of conscious or unconscious social action. Nevertheless, overly elaborated methodological approaches or the setting of too high methodological stakes should be avoided in the current stage of research on Romania; such is the conclusion of the first part of my study. Since this stage is devoted to the exploration of historiography’s research topics and to finding out the combatants, conceptual differences should not become criteria of exclusion. In this sense, “the methodological indeterminacy” characterizing “conceptual history” makes this research method useful for the Romanian case. Observing the basic, normative rules of a good historiography is more important than employing a rigorous methodology. This is why the studies in this collective volume resulting from the September 2009 *International Conference on Romanian Conceptual History* held at Timișoara will be thematically devoted to various problematizations and approaches.

Romanian historiography asks similar questions to those of interest to German historiography. In the 1960s,⁴ when conceptual history was confronted with three established schools of historical research, German historians thematized similar issues to those concerning present-day Romanian historians. Going against the grain of common political history, which focused on events and intentions, conceptual history turned its attention to social change. It ran against the classical history of ideas, from Droysen to Meinecke, disagreeing with the latter’s faith in eternal reason. Conceptual history highlighted fissures and discontinuities; it opposed

³ Heinen, “Auf den Schwingen Draculas nach Europa?” 91–104; Murgescu, *Istoria din ghiozdan*; Ihrig, “Die kommunistische Vergangenheit,” 81–90; Schippel, *Kultureller Wandel als Ansinnen*, 77–100.

⁴ To date, several scholars have written surveys that trace the history of conceptual history. See Dipper, “Die ‘Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe,’” 281–308.

social history⁵ by foregrounding structures and processes due to culture, as well as the need to understand circumstances and the role of language, concepts and discourses throughout the course of history.

The agenda of conceptual history was not set from the very beginning. It had to make sure that its object was “the writing of history,” an executive action, which would lead to scholars’ further analysis of controversies and similar approaches from within and outside Germany. We could explain many of the reproaches later ascribed to conceptual history by its experimental beginnings and agenda: its initial aim was circumscribed to “high, classical literature”; it gave hardly any attention to contextual linguistic usage, and was characterized by an insufficient theoretical grounding and the tendency to use concepts more as indicators of evolution than as factors of transformation, omitting to take into consideration nonverbal communication.⁶ With the passage of time, however, these things changed, particularly thanks to the findings of Reinhart Koselleck and the scientific efforts of his followers.

At bottom, every historian asks himself the following question: What exactly triggers change? From the point of view of a historiography leaning towards natural science, the answer should be found in the intrinsic forces of physical systems⁷; from the point of view of historicism, the answer lies in man’s spiritual force. Thus, Darwinism refers to evolution, whereas social history explains the transformation of structures and processes as beyond individual will.⁸ Open to cultural sciences, the new historiography sees transformation as an extremely complex phenomenon where the past, present and future meet.

Transformation is subject to a multiple type of logic: it implies both the necessity for reformulation triggered by external causes, and the dynamics of the transformation conceived within a cultural system. In this case, “the language system” links the dialectic and strained rapport of “world” and “will” to a third, independent, socially-mediated layer, that of

⁵ We remember, in this sense, the seminal works of Jürgen Kocka and Hans-Ulrich Wehler as well as the journal *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (1875), 1.

⁶ Cf. Gumbrecht, *Dimensionen und Grenzen der Begriffsgeschichte*; Jordan, *Theorien und Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 123–8; Leonhard, “Grundbegriffe und Sattelzeiten,” 71–86, particularly 77–9.

⁷ Cf. Jäger, *Einführung in die Umweltgeschichte*.

⁸ For a description of the schools of twentieth-century historical sciences see, for instance, Jordan, *Theorien und Methoden*; Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*; Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme*; Eibach and Lottes, *Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft*.

collective interpretations. One can express an event differently, using context instead of text,⁹ so that “some concepts” are attributed a constituent force which brings order by itself. In the face of the “incomprehensible” real, such concepts make history apparently “intelligible” (via terms such as “nation” and “class”) and they give rise to cultural events and social changes.¹⁰ Put differently, conceptual history is interested in “the social construction of reality” (following the socio-scientific description by Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger),¹¹ in day-to-day knowledge as reflected in language, as well as in mediating open or controversial interpretive options. The triangular rapport between transmitter, interpreter and the world (Rüdiger Graf) gives information about how some semantic options can become socially mandatory. Thus, the object of conceptual history is the study of how and why the languages of reality are formed.¹² These issues also represent the focal point of other cultural-scientific approaches, but conceptual history is particular in its focus on major terms and lexical fields, and in lacking the intention to prove “an era’s self-consciousness.” “Culture” must be explained through “a quilt of symbolical meanings and sensorial worlds”¹³; this becomes a contradiction once the present is problematized in the sense of semantic knowledge about the past.

Many cultural-scientific approaches have focused on the *linguistic turn* with which conceptual history is credited at present.¹⁴ This turn reflected historians’ hope for the Westernization of German society starting with the 1950s. (That is why it focused on the period of transition, also known as the early modernization period.) It increased people’s trust in the ability to establish order after World War II and it pleaded for a critical reflection on the traditional conceptual apparatus. In the Anglo-American space, the so-called “Cambridge School of Intellectual History” dominated the field.

⁹ This opinion is shared by most new historians of culture. Nevertheless, inside this movement one can distinguish several levels of constructing the real. This conforms to the description of the new cultural conceptual history by Tschopp, “Die Neue Kulturgeschichte,” 598 sq. See the same source for further bibliographical references.

¹⁰ Christiane Frey, “Begriffsgeschichte(n). Zur Karriere und Neuformierung eines neuerdings kulturwissenschaftlichen Ansatzes,” 2008, paragraph 15, http://www.iaslonline.de/index.php?vorgang_id=1840.

¹¹ Berger and Luckmann, *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit*.

¹² Steinmetz, “Vierzig Jahre Begriffsgeschichte,” 174–97, particularly 186.

¹³ Leonhard, “Grundbegriffe und Sattelzeiten,” 86.

¹⁴ See Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts*; but also Reichardt, “Historische Semantik zwischen ‘lexicométrie’ und ‘New Cultural History,’” 7–28, particularly 18–21; Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, 40–43.

It thematized the intellectual context in which important works of political philosophy were created during early modernity. By framing writings in the time's linguistic and literary context, *intellectual history* can reveal how German conceptual history has reacted to temporal conceptual bonding, without totally depriving the concepts of their individual components.¹⁵ Several critical positions can be distinguished in this respect: Reinhart Koselleck was interested in perceiving the world through language, while the primary interest of the main representatives from the Cambridge School, John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, was vested in investigating the language system which generates political actions.¹⁶ France, with its particular penchant for discourse, generated several approaches, among which Michel Foucault's is best known. Foucault wondered about (social) norms which "structure our understanding of the conceptual-linguistic universe and the creation of texts."¹⁷ "Historical semiotics" was also stimulated by literary and linguistic sciences, by sociology and ethnology. The disciples of Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck continued to develop the two scholars' approaches. Soon, alongside the application of their established approaches onto various socio-cultural milieus, new approaches also loomed.

In Romania, Lucian Boia examined the great myths of the national conceptual history and laid the foundations of independent research, an endeavor that can only partially dodge objective evaluation and which leaves very little room for methodological development.¹⁸ In the broader context of memory history and "lieux de mémoire"¹⁹ in which Lucian Boia's studies could be positioned, scholarship to date has been quite active, resulting in numerous publications. Yet, it should be noted that the Romanian cultural space lacks far-reaching studies of the type of Pierre Nora's "Lieux de mémoire."²⁰

In opposition to Lucian Boia's analysis of Romanian myths, one counts Vlad Georgescu's attempt to draw up a history of systematic-

¹⁵ Hellmuth and von Ehrenstein, "Intellectual History Made in Britain," 149–72.

¹⁶ Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans and van Vree, "A Comparative Perspective on Conceptual History," 1–9, particularly 1.

¹⁷ Daniel, *Kompendium Kulturgeschichte*, 356.

¹⁸ Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*; Boia, *Romania. Borderland of Europe*; Heinen, "Sammelrezension zur rumänischen Geschichte," <http://www.sehepunkte.de/2003/10/4088.html>.

¹⁹ The South-Western Alliance points out 97 titles on the concept of "lieux de mémoire" (<http://swb.bsz-bw.de/>).

²⁰ Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 1984–1992.

classifying ideas for Romania between 1369 and 1878.²¹ In his 1976 book, Georgescu compiled over 2000 texts by 300 authors in 172 thematic areas, and presented the central theses of each thematic field. His dedication to accuracy and quantitative decoding resulted in a very high diversity of ideas whose internal cohesion and context could not always be revealed. Yet, one particular observation by Georgescu is extremely relevant—he notes that, starting with 1830, political writers from Moldavia and Wallachia no longer related to the present only; they started to make up possible scenarios for the future. If we bear in mind Koselleck's observations, we could speak of the passage from "the concepts of experience" to the "concepts of expectations."²² Other aspects of Georgescu's study are less convincing; such is the case, for instance, with his thesis about relative autonomy from external influences.²³ All in all, perusing Georgescu's work helps one discover the synchronism between Romanian political thought and that of Western Europe. Additionally, his book draws our attention to arguments and to the question of framing the concepts of *patriotism* and *national consciousness* in an adequate socio-political context.

Some studies in this volume discuss linguistic changes in Romania in the first half of the nineteenth century. These scholars prove to have a similar interest to that of Reinhart Koselleck. They trace the conceptual change that occurred during the period of transition to "modernity," more precisely the change of the lexical stock and its semantics during the time of Romanian transition, between 1780 and 1860.²⁴ Whereas the modernization of Germany became an integral part of the process of Western European modernization, Romania's modernization occurred in the context of multiple social, cultural and territorial breakdowns and as a result of the conscious adoption of a Western lexical stock. As a consequence,

²¹ Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești*.

²² Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 68.

²³ Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești*, 351.

²⁴ Todoreanu, "Contribuții la stilul terminologic juridic-administrativ românesc din Transilvania," 103–36; Bogza-Irimie, *Termeni politico-sociali în primele periodice românești*; Bulgăr, "Evoluția stilului administrativ," 75–102; Bochmann, "Zum Verhältnis von gesellschaftlichem Fortschrittsdenken und lexikalischer Neuerung," 151–70; Close, *The Development of Modern Rumanian*; Bochmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des politisch-sozialen Wortschatzes*; Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*; Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*; Saramandu, *Terminologia juridic-administrativă*; Metzeltin, *Nationalstaatlichkeit und Identität*; Metzeltin, Lindenbauer, and Wochele, *Die Entwicklung des Zivilisationswortschatzes im südosteuropäischen Raum im 19.*; Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs in Rumänien*.

the Romanian case is contradictory and complex, and it requires a vast linguistic knowledge. This is an aspect that has been primarily investigated by socio-linguists who have described lexical changes. Even though the *Junimea* (*Youth*) intellectual association provided important studies on “forms without substance,” historians have largely neglected the issue of linguistic change. Nevertheless, a few of them are praiseworthy for their examination of the semantic change characterizing the concept of *nation*. Such are the cases of Keith Hitchins, Sorin Mitu and Victor Neumann.²⁵

Not long ago, Willibald Steinmetz expressed his objection to classical lexicometry and the history of concepts, considering the latter to be incapable of really “explaining” linguistic change. This was the case because scholars remained at the level of description, and a revision of this mishap should have foregrounded causalities. “The main problem is that linguistic activity is neglected at the level of micro-diachronia”; “Only the inclusion of the pragmatic dimension of linguistics and the investigation of linguistic interactions over shorter periods of time and in more concrete locations could lead to the development of adequate methods to explain semantic changes.”²⁶

Other scientific approaches that examine conceptual, methodological and perceptual changes have titles such as the history of reception, the politics of language usage (Hermann Luebbe) or cultural transfer, and Entangled Histories—each one of these approaches having specific sources and methods of analysis. Given the multitude of problematizations that somehow overlap, several concepts have been suggested as identifying a shared perspective: Willibald Steinmetz pleaded for the term “historical semantics,”²⁷ Rolf Reichardt favored the “historical analysis of discourse,”²⁸ The Center of Literary and Cultural Research from Berlin

²⁵ See Mitu, *Re-searching the Nation*; Neumann, *Neam, popor sau națiune?*.

²⁶ Steinmetz, “Vierzig Jahre Begriffsgeschichte,” 184. One of the presentations held at the *International Conference of Romanian Conceptual History* in Timișoara (September 23–26, 2009) indicated this orientation solicited by Willibald Steinmetz. This was Mihaela Popescu’s analysis of the concept of *Christianity* which attempted to understand the changes of the semantic field for “Christian religion” during the public meetings held by 1848 Romanian Revolutionaries from Banat and Transylvania. The author’s study is forthcoming in a volume edited by Victor Neumann and published by the “Reihart Koselleck” International Doctoral School in Conceptual History, which will also include studies by PhD candidates Henriete-Elfride Richer, Cristian Roiban, Alexandru Zidaru, Johanna Schweighoffer (editors’ note, V.N. and A.H.).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 182.

²⁸ Reichardt, “Historische Semantik,” 18–21.

proposed “figures of knowledge,”²⁹ and the Doctoral College from Helsinki suggested using the concept of “conceptual history” with a very different meaning from that of Quentin Skinner, John Pocock, Henrik Stenius, Rolf Reichardt and Reinhart Koselleck.³⁰ Under the circumstances, should we restrain ourselves to an analysis of political culture and its emblematic condition?³¹

No consensus exists about the use of one single term. It would be fascinating if one could write a history of discourse that investigated speaking as a case of social action, examined the struggle for social recognition, exposed the structure of communicational communities, and analyzed the politics of linguistic usage, and on this basis drew up what is imaginable and articulable. Such a project is at present impossible. To a certain degree, the Cambridge School’s numerous and justified critiques on conceptual history suggest that, through an enormous theoretical and methodological effort coupled with the availability of basic sources, a fertile research in this direction would be possible. Any scientific research of today requires a cautious beginning.

I think it is worthwhile to look back on “the basic historical concepts” that have been jointly studied by philosophers, historians, literary scholars, linguists, sociologists and political analysts, in view of indicating conceptual changes on the basis of a close reading of texts. According to Willibald Steinmetz, the role of conceptual history is to emit hypotheses and initiatives of a broader scope as compared to historical semantics:

Conceptual history will not lose its *raison-d’être* even if it keeps its conventional format, that of focusing on the connecting points of the diachronic semantic change of words based upon a rather modest number of quotes from encyclopedias, theoretical texts on politics and other dispersed sources which, to quite a high degree, spring from the situation of communication. This *raison-d’être* will basically consist in its support for the formulation of hypotheses in more complex processes of semantic change. If understood as a branch of the semantics of history which increasingly devotes itself to the investigation of ample semantic fields, models of sentences, discourses or *language*—in the meaning ascribed to it by John Pocock, one that also considers the forms and situations of usage which are changing—, the old type of

²⁹ <http://www.zfl.gwz-berlin.de/forschung/laufende-projekte/begriffsgeschichte/> (last accessed 08. 01. 2010); Frey, *Begriffsgeschichte*, §2, 46–47.

³⁰ See the syllabi of the 2010 courses from Helsinki’s Doctoral College: http://www.helsinkiuniversity.fi/home/courses/introduction_to_conceptual_history?readmore=4 (last accessed 08. 01. 2010).

³¹ Leonhard, *Liberalismus*, 567.

conceptual history can undoubtedly have its own value. This is a method that quickly leads to verifiable results.³²

Michael Eggers and Matthias Rothe are even more firmly in favor of conceptual history when they note that it offers the possibility to acquire historical knowledge without theoretical overload:

Perhaps the very absence of constraints regarding the idea of anchoring one's initiative to a theory of history stimulates conceptual history [...]. No one has to aim at reconciling one's research work with a great theory in order for it to hold.³³

There are many reasons why one could be reserved about the timeliness of an ambitious and methodological project on the history of discourse or the semantics of Romanian history. This happens because existent initiatives are still very few and insufficient, and one still needs to search for and provide scholars with adequate sources. Secondly, a qualified community of researchers must be trained and made familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches.

The contributions to this volume either focus on semantic change over a few weeks, or the renovation of socio-political languages over the passage of two centuries. The methodological approach alternates with the analytical one and it investigates important individual works and ample lexical fields, challenging the critiques brought to conceptual history. The authors have concentrated on the modern language in usage since the Romantic-Enlightenment period (1780), particularly emphasizing political practice and "speech" as social action. Each study shows how interpretation creates reality. The simultaneity of non-simultaneity is representative for conceptual history, just as overlapping various temporal layers and cultural systems is particularly efficient in the Romanian case.

All the contributions share an interest in public discourse via the analysis of historiography (Hans Christian Maner), the exploitation of new sources such as images (Ruxandra Demetrescu, Mirela Murgescu and Bogdan Murgescu), the analysis of political thought (Wim van Meurs), the examination of legal texts (Dietmar Müller), or the highlighting of key-concepts in Opacs (Armin Heinen). By these endeavors, we have avoided limiting our investigation to "superior literature" alone.

Concepts rethinking Romania's cultural events and those referring to the identity of its citizens predominate in the essays included in the pre-

³² Steinmetz, "Vierzig Jahre Begriffsgeschichte," 182.

³³ Eggers and Rothe, "Die Begriffsgeschichte ist tot, es lebe die Begriffsgeschichte!" 14.

sent volume. Discussions around the cultural place of Romania and its citizens are part and parcel of contemporary public debates, stimulated by the emigration of over two million of its citizens to foreign countries in Europe, as well as by EU bi-annual reports. Several articles are dedicated to the sphere of politics and problematize Romania's capacity for democratization. Less visible are the fields of "economy" and "society," even though the concepts of "property" and "transition" bring to the foreground important aspects of Romania's social history.

The Historiography of Romania: Normative Rules

The studies in this volume analyze the history of present-day Romanian territories; they reflect central terms, notions and concepts characterizing public debates from Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, Bukovina, and Banat. They often use novel sources and analyze "structures of thought" and "linguistic" concepts by a variety of methodological means. The authors strongly believe that a historiography of Romania's past can promote scientific and social progress only if the semantics of notions and concepts is freed from the overload characterizing collective memory. According to Helmut König, historiography helps the past and strengthens it against attempts to be instrumentalized to the benefit of the objectives of the present.³⁴ Historiography not only contemplates the past, it also controls itself in contemplating the past, it exposes itself to criticism and, in its turn, it criticizes conventional knowledge. For König, the role of history is that of delegitimizing communicative and cultural memory.³⁵ Today, historiography is no longer responsible for only forging a community, but also for supporting and facilitating freedom as to self-determined life-styles and freely-chosen habitats by fostering independent thought and action.

The critical enlightenment of the historian occurs when he considers the multitude of methodological constraints and the diversity of explicit orientations that mean to dodge the assertions of collective memory. Below I will indicate the working method used by the authors from this volume.

1. The science of history can be edifying only when it is developed in relation to the international state of research, when it discusses its ideas

³⁴ König, *Politik und Gedächtnis*, 117.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

and minutely adopts them. The fact that throughout time history conceives different and constantly better presentations leads to the creation of “more objective” stories. The goal is to achieve an open-ended discourse. In other words, “evolution” in history is possible only if one strengthens “the objectivity of motivation,” extends the “objectivity of consensus,”³⁶ and intensifies³⁷ “the objectivity of construction.”³⁸ In writing the history of the notion of *people* during communism in Romania, Kevin David Adamson presents historiography as conversant with conventional interpretations through its appeal to the ideology of inclusion and exclusion.³⁹

2. History does not have an independent methodological apparatus; it makes use of methods belonging to other humanist and social disciplines (linguistics and literature, political and social sciences, image analysis, ethnology, etc.). As already shown by Johann Martin Cladenius (1742), each option in favor of a particular type of approach opens the opportunity for knowledge, just as each approach to the past mirrors a specific “point of view.” For instance, in our volume, some contributors follow the social complexity of the worlds of action and representation (Wim van Meurs and Dietmar Müller), others concentrate on the history of word usage in political analysis (Armin Heinen), and still others highlight the concepts of *patriotism*, *civism* and *nation* (Klaus Bochmann and Victor Neumann).
3. As it transpires from the studies included in this volume, an extremely important future mission of Romanian historiography will be its “re-discovery” of regional, cultural-linguistic and social diversity. Resulting from the union of Wallachia, Moldavia, Dobrogea, Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, the national state of Romania is a modern structure less than one hundred years old. Any historiography which respects the past must investigate the diversity of its conceptual and representational fields. Collective interpretations must disappear, and stimuli, overlappings, and semantic delimitations must be identified. In principle, historians should abandon the use of terms such as “we,” “the Romanian people,” and “Romania” as “agent”; instead, they

³⁶ I.e., the capacity of history to unite people with different viewpoints thanks to its semantic content.

³⁷ For a thorough discussion of this topic, see Rösen, *Historische Vernunft*, 119–32.

³⁸ I.e., the capacity of history to include among its meanings the formation of identity in the context of argumentative communication.

³⁹ Adamson, *Socialism, Revolution, and Transition*.

should use legal and order-generating concepts, such as: “territories,” “Romanian state,” “citizen,” “Romanian linguistic sphere,” “Hungarian leading groups,” “Romanian-language journalistic elite,” etc.

4. The science of history is interested in past human suffering, thought and action. Put differently, it focuses on the totality of the human being in its achievements. That being the case, history, and especially a culture-oriented history, cannot exclude the use of other sciences; in fact, it can only function as an interdisciplinary field. This implies two things: a) each author must be open to the working methods of other sciences at least in what regards the acquisition of information and of a bird’s-eye-view; b) beyond the individual level, science can be imagined as a system of reciprocal fecundity among kindred areas, all this thanks to critical control. That is why the working group from Timișoara includes historians, art critics, linguists, literary scholars, philosophers, political analysts and sociologists.
5. Romanian conceptual history can be applied by following a European perspective. Provincialism used to characterize Romanian historiography for a long time; this manner of thinking should be left behind, while the perspective on national statehood should be attenuated. The history of “Romanian” territories must be incorporated in a transnational context.⁴⁰ This implies the valorification of “conceptual history” studies from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Bulgaria and Hungary in view of including specific points of problematization. This finally means writing “conceptual history” as a history of “cultural transfer.” Willibald Steinmetz identified three reasons in favor of conceptual re-semanticization: a) the disappearance of some concepts’ plausibility; b) the intensification or temporization of words’ strategic values and of the mode of communication in recurrent situations; c) inflaming one’s linguistic vocabulary and semantics by lexical importation from another language.⁴¹

If one can say that Romanian historians have reached a consensus in the last decades, this would consist in Romanian cultural history becoming coherent and intelligible by the mere preoccupation with external influences and their adoption. Conceptual history needs to be extended beyond the national context. The investigation of imagined communities

⁴⁰ Iordachi, “Entangled Histories. Re-writing the History of Central and Southeastern Europe.” <http://www.cees-europe.fr/fr/etudes/revue4/r4a5.pdf>.

⁴¹ Steinmetz, “Vierzig Jahre Begriffsgeschicht,” 188–93.

should be replaced by forays into real contexts of communication. *Transnationality*, in the sense of comparative cultural assessment, and *historicity*, in the sense of a diachronic semantic change, are *sine qua non* conditions for writing conceptual history. The project of a broader conceptual history not only needs a scholarly transnational perspective; it also needs international programs of research which use the diversity of cultural knowledge and ensure multi-perspectivism. Similar to the case of the “Reinhard Koselleck” International Doctoral School of Conceptual History (which I co-founded jointly with Professor Victor Neumann), the Circle of Timișoara was born as a result of the above-mentioned innovative understanding of historiographical studies. It includes researchers from Romania, Germany, France, the U.S., Hungary and the Netherlands.

Conclusions

The studies on Romanian conceptual history in this volume are productive thanks to their manner of approach and interpretation:

1. Some studies are drawn to historiography; they allow the identification of semantic changes from the past and they propose the elaboration of “concepts of experience,” to use Reinhart Koselleck’s term. The question they address is: How exactly has historiography made use of concepts from the past—in a reasoned or non-reasoned manner, intentionally or unintentionally—and how has it established its norms and problematized its traditions and ideological orientations? (Victor Neumann and Wim van Meurs).
2. Other studies analyze semantic changes in periods of transition. Keith Hitchins thematizes the change of the concept of *liberalism* from representations of individual freedom to collective representations in the first half of the nineteenth century. Klaus Bochmann describes the semantic transformation of the concept of *patriotism* towards a concept of an ethnicized nation. Mirela Murgescu and Bogdan Murgescu reflect on the semantic charge of the term *transition* in light of its present-day meaning, namely a painful process of Westernization. Angela Harre defines the meanings given to the concept of *progress* in Romanian culture from the 1820s–1830s onwards, a period when Romania for the first time became receptive to Western influences. Edda Binder analyzes the concept of *constitution* and its impact on legal and political languages from Romanian public discourses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

3. The issue of *national specificity* is discussed by Klaus Bochmann, Victor Neumann and Ruxandra Demetrescu.
4. Klaus Bochmann and Victor Neumann investigate inclusions and exclusions contained in the concept of *nation*.
5. Armin Heinen, Dietmar Müller, Hans Christian Maner and Klaus Bochmann describe long-term lexical changes.
6. Keith Hitchins, Balázs Trencsényi and Armin Heinen ponder over integration in the European and Southern-European cultural space.
7. Victor Neumann discusses rhetorical strategies.
8. Armin Heinen's study gives information about the different cultural evolutions from Banat, Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia.
9. Conceptual history and the theory of history in a European and Romanian context are underscored in Alexandre Escudier's article as well as in Victor Neumann's introductory study.

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- 1969; one could also add: Bulgăr, Gheorghe, „Despre limba documentelor administrative la începutul secolului trecut (1800-1820),” in *Contribuții la istoria limbii române literare în secolul al XIX-lea*, III, București: Editura Academiei, 1962, 75-102.
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Some Reflections on Historical Semantics, Political Modernity and Romanian History (1780–1939)

Alexandre Escudier

Any general theory of history does not allow itself to be hindered by constraints. Any story claiming that it “really happened” is condemned to a minimum of analytical reflection surrounding the hypotheses of its own practice. Between these two extremes, a middle ground is possible. In what follows, I will propose this very middle ground as a theoretical approach to conceptual history by applying classical political concepts to Romanian socio-political history. Irrespective of the empirical approach used, Europeans share a common horizon of knowledge: they investigate the empirical meanings of historical semantics by comparing them to political modernity. This happens not only as a common topic of analysis but especially in view of offering a heuristic method and heuristic tools of research.

Comparisons are indispensable for forming hypotheses and for a better understanding of particular cases. How should one make comparisons? What should be compared, and what should be the analytical goal behind performing the comparison? Are the historical experiences of countries so different or so specific that they cannot be confronted or cannot give rise to a heuristic value? Jakob Burckhardt holds that if this were true, we would be condemned to historical micrology.

It seems, however, that the contrary is true. We need comparison and hence we can build premises in a reflexive manner. In my view, sketching a thorough typology of political experiences is an indispensable premise for comparing countries and eras. Following the hermeneutic circle existing between the parts and the whole, historical comparison can significantly enrich the value of monographs and individual studies.

The main difficulty lies in the fact that every typology uses as points of departure certain historical experiences that are limited by coercion. Any ideal formalization is dependent upon context and competences respectively, and it can hardly transgress its condition. Consequently, the theoretical knowledge deriving from comparative endeavors is paradoxical. On the one hand, it can be achieved by sketching a limited and contextual typology; on the other hand, it must be permanently enriched and perfected in the process of knowledge-acquisition by empirically comparing various countries and eras. In this sense, historians of political concepts are only at the beginning of a long-term process of forming hypotheses.

How can a comparative semantics of political modernity be possible? This question should be asked by any study dedicated to a country or a concept so as to contribute to the preliminary structuration of problematizations and research results from a global comparative perspective. In this sense, the theory of history and Reinhart Koselleck's empirical works (on the absolutist state and European Enlightenment, on Prussia and the iconology of violent death in Europe) are extremely productive.

In what follows, I will attempt (I) to bring back to mind Koselleck's main theses and hypotheses and (II) to map possible evolutions of his approach; finally, (III) my intention is to formulate some considerations on modern Romanian history.

Koselleck's Main Theses and Hypotheses on Historical Semantics

"All concepts which contain the development of an entire process from a semiotic point of view elude definition; only things that do not have history can be defined." Nietzsche's dictum from *The Genealogy of Morals*¹ summarizes in succinct form what is methodologically important for conceptual history.² His ideas are close to Walter Bryce Gallie's reflections on "essentially contested concepts," even if this affinity has not been thoroughly analyzed to date.³

¹ Nietzsche, "Zur Genealogie der Moral," 317, II, §13.

² Reinhart Koselleck quoted this dictum in a relevant passage from his introduction to *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, XXIII.

³ Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," 167–98. According to Gallie, *essentially contested concepts* have seven distinguishing characteristics: they are evaluative (i.e., they refer to acts of estimation); they have several semantic layers; thus, they can be described in several ways; semantically speaking, they remain open and flexible; agents see them as essentially controversial; they refer to commonly known examples; there is a struggle

“Concepts” and “words” are not congruent terms. “Words” designate reality in a descriptive manner, which is usually controversial from a social point of view. A “table” is a table. “A rose is a rose is a rose” (Gertrude Stein). Socio-political “concepts,” however, do not have such a univocal character. They are plurivalent to a different degree and often bring about socio-political conflicts that can still be modified from a historical point of view within the framework situated between an empirical space and the horizon of expectations. “Their internal temporal structure”⁴ (Koselleck) persists given their ambivalent character lying at the borderline between experience and expectations. It refers to two aspects, namely, real history, which is over-evaluated from a semantic point of view, and future-related representations and expectations of several social classes. Semantics chooses its research topic from among the basic socio-political concepts characterizing the diverse languages that have established themselves throughout history, and which have become battlefields or means to combat social disputes.

Socio-political concepts require a double historicization. First, they function as “indices”⁵ to past realities and are minutely investigated, just as in the case of so-called reconstructed fossils of previous experiences. For today’s historians they have an archival linguistic character. At the same time, socio-political concepts represent historical “factors” and must be regarded as a constitutive part of past social disputes. Put differently, words, concepts and language do not just represent strategic sources of social disputes; they also contribute to the formation of ideas and to creating a dialogue about every historical moment. Concepts have an active dimension: they represent horizons of expectations and they act as sources of interpretation in the deployment of historical reality. That does not mean that we should regard them as a supra-ordered causal instance. They must always be combined *ad hoc* with other factors (of constitutional, socio-historical, economic and geopolitical origins), and they maintain their special semantic and pragmatic status.

This aspect is fundamental since conceptual history is often received and implemented as a separate method of co-originary approaches. Its role is not to replace but to complete a “structural history”⁶ which is loyal to

for the only legitimate usage of these concepts and for their semantic determination. That is why they polarize entire semantic fields, just like Koselleck’s basic historical concepts.

⁴ Koselleck, “Preface,” VI.

⁵ Koselleck, “Introduction,” XIV.

⁶ Koselleck, “Thanking Speech on 23 November 2004,” 33–60, particularly 59–60.

the social, the economic and the political fields. Reinhart Koselleck's historical semantics would be unconceivable and unattainable had it not been for the impulse of Werner Conze and the Circle of Social History from Heidelberg. Without the Circle's loyal association with social and structural history, the history of concepts would only be able to foster a history of words.⁷

Despite the existence of some faulty interpretations, we cannot but acknowledge the methodological complementarity of semantics and pragmatics. If we leave aside Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock's unfounded criticism (which is not sufficiently informed) regarding Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual history, we must remember the famous question "Cui bono?" The methodological encounter between historical "semantics" ("what" is formulated, and what are its "meanings"?) and historical "pragmatics" ("who" says what, in what "context," to the benefit of which social "groups" constituted on an identitarian basis as part of the act of speaking seen as a unit of political action?) remains essential. Because the semantic resources of the conflict are configured and used in relation to place, we must always use historical-structural analyses in order to associate them with their context of probability and with their scope of action. Semantics cannot function without pragmatics; their complementary rapport feeds conceptual and structural history since they always make reference to one another from both a theoretical-historical viewpoint and a narrative one.

The gist of the matter regarding a conceptual approach to history lies elsewhere. This is related to the key word of "period of transition." This "period of transition" covers the interim between 1750 and 1850, when the Ancien Régime and feudal society ended under the pressure of two revolutions. I refer here to the process of industrialization and to the implementation of new principles of order and political legitimacy, which occurred during the American and French Revolutions.

The hypothesis of the "period of transition"⁸ is heuristic and, as such, it remains controversial. Irrespective of this (because the status of social representations of time differ from one country to another), of paramount importance are the four corresponding questions about the processes of "democratization," "ideologization," "politicization," and "tem-

⁷ Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte," 116–31; "Sozialgeschichte und Begriffsgeschichte," 89–109.

⁸ Koselleck, "Preface," XV. Also cf. Koselleck, "Richtlinien für das Lexikon politisch-sozialer Begriffe der Neuzeit," 81–99.

poralization.” These four research hypotheses must contribute to the reconstruction of processes regarding the profound and vast transformation of the modern socio-political language (and not only of the German one).

This set of questions must be subjected to *ad hoc* critical verification in keeping with each particular history, since they represent an important contribution to standardizing the need for comparison. Are these four research hypotheses viable and helpful in all locations? If not, how should they be reformulated and completed? To give an answer, I would like to remind the reader of the processes of transformation referred to in the hypothesis regarding the “period of transition.” I will then propose some ways of clarification.

Firstly, in what regards the hypothesis of a “democratization” of modern socio-political concepts, we have to empirically note three basic characteristics:

- the extension of the political vocabulary to all social levels, and their subsequent endorsement of it;
- the inclusion of new social experiences in the political language taken over from the Ancien Régime;
- the emergence and condensation of a public space of novel quality (its key term being public opinion) via new reading, speaking, and mobilization practices.

Secondly, we are confronted with the process of the “ideologization” of political language through:

- an increasingly abstract political language;
- the formation of numerous collective nouns in the singular, which are henceforth prone to manipulation given their ambivalent character.

Thirdly, we notice a new quality of the “politicization” process:

- antithetical concepts are created, and claimed by political groups which consider one another as being incompatible;
- the more political languages are temporalized and characterized as a form of a subliminal historical philosophy, the more do they become the object of an agonal politicization, legitimizing the manifestation of extremes.

Fourthly, we notice the “temporalization” of utopia and socio-political expectations. This process is associated with the following aspects:

- the divergence between the empirical space and the horizon of expectations;⁹
- using the noun of “history” as a collective noun in the singular;¹⁰
- the formation of a new political genre of discourse and reflection—the philosophy of history—as one form of the basic critique of absolutist states. The phenomenon is not deprived of dialectic irony¹¹ because absolutist states managed to end civil and religious wars, creating a space of reconciliation between the state and belligerent religious groups; yet, it failed throughout the eighteenth century due to the functional critique of society. According to Koselleck, the critique of those times was saturated with radical views of the future, and they had a new quality, one which was immanently secular. Radical claims on justice took up a secularized form: they were dynamically and immanently solicited;
- the result: a new form of civil and religious wars as well as political ideologies with total pretensions and a gnostic openness to fight till the end. A new era was thus born, one which Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner called “heroic modernity.”¹²

This complex series of problematizations is in part highly indebted to Western ideas; it has been influenced by Carl Schmitt (in the sense of a basic critique of modern views on the future and on ways to claim justice). Nevertheless, it maintains heuristic expressiveness from a synchronic and diachronic point of view, as well as from a semasiological and onomasiological point of view.¹³

⁹ Koselleck, “‘Erfahrungsraum’ und ‘Erwartungshorizont’,” 349–75.

¹⁰ In *Lexikon*, the concept of “history” is used as a *basic concept* for all the “basic concepts” of the socio-political language from German-speaking regions. (Simultaneously, the species of “the philosophy of history” is considered to be implicitly supra-ordered to the totality of modern political ideologies, as if it represented the basic dynamic model for the teleological horizon of expectations characterizing the entire field of *modern politics*).

¹¹ Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise*.

¹² Kittsteiner, “Die Stufen der Moderne,” 91–117; *Wir werden gelebt*.

¹³ “The *semasiological* aspect that covers all the meanings of a term is restricted to those sectors which cover social and political structures, as well as their transformation. Given this, it will never assess the entire semantic field of a word. [...] The *semasiological* aspect that records all the possible names of predetermined circumstances can be taken into consideration only to the degree to which its adjacent names and synonyms indicate historical diversity of social and political change.” Koselleck, “Introduction,” XXI–XXII.

Vast Processes in the Evolution of Political Modernity: The Perspective of Global Comparison

Under the umbrella of a *processual topos* we can go one step further and name other vast processes regarding the change of modern socio-political languages, processes that seem to be as important as those of democratization, ideologization, politicization and temporalization of the so-called period of transition.

Under the broad scope of a “comparative historical semantics of modern politics,” it is essential to specify the most important global processes which in the long run (at least since the beginning of the sixteenth century) have alternatively influenced modern political languages through the diversity of action that ensued, whether this was done concomitantly or in contradiction to general practices. Such a broad framework would subsume detailed monographic analyses and would place them under a *common processual horizon*. This comparison would allow us to take changes into consideration. These would include the extralinguistic structural change, the semiotic change (of historical forms of languages), the semantic change (stabilized semantic chains), and the pragmatic change (of situative discourse, dependent on the variable structures of communication and political cultures).

The Vernacularization of Political Semantics

The way leading to the creation of vernacular languages is different from one country to another, but the process of vernacularization has been common in Europe irrespective of the various countries’ forms of modern political action. This process should be specified with empirical precision by thoroughly investigating the particularities of each country and even of each region. In what follows, I will enumerate some main issues to consider. When, how, and through whom (elites and social classes) did there occur the passage from old languages (in the case of politics or politics via religion) to vernacular languages? What ignited this process and what were its initial conditions? These languages used to vary extensively depending on power structure, processes of state formation, as well as specific demographic, socio-cultural and geopolitical conditions. Which were the vernacular languages which competed against one another for hegemony during the process of vernacularization (such as Romanian, Hungarian, German, etc.)? What was the language of power or the dominant po-

litical culture in relation to territories and chronological phases (such as Ottoman, Hungarian, German, Slavic, etc.)? What complex transfers are hidden behind the passage from old languages to vernacular languages (from the language of the clergy and the intelligentsia respectively to that of the people, or from taboo folk languages to official state languages, or from the language of foreign rule to the language of the demographic majority, etc.)?

Historicizing the above-mentioned process of vernacularization presupposes distinguishing other numerous processes of hybridization in each country and historical experience concerned (its cultural-demographic condition, its geopolitical position, the process of state formation, etc.). All these issues are extremely relevant because this passage from the old languages of elites to modern folk languages could influence the possibilities of forming a socio-political language in the long run.

Temporalization and Detemporalization of Socio-Political Concepts

My thesis is that temporalization is not a supra-ordered process of transformation characterizing political modernity. In this respect, we can specify Koselleck's thesis in more minute detail: from a formal point of view, and from an empirical one.¹⁴ Mentioning the divergence between experience and expectation is not enough. This happens because, on a formal level, "expectation" always consists in two essentially heterogeneous aspects—first of all, "predictive-cognitive aspects," and second, "normative-expectative aspects." Hence very subtle empirical differences can derive.

"Predictive-cognitive" aspects claim to express reality in an intersubjective manner, one which can be verified thanks to historicizing scientific techniques. It is through this means that historical structures allowing one to make predictions about the possible near future are revealed and made conscious. "Normative-expectative" aspects aim at something entirely different. They do not refer to the future as a case of structural probabilities, but to normative expectations which can be either dogmatically religious or philosophically secularizing, and which are determined function of historical epochs, cultures and representations of salvation and justice. This happens because normative expectations (as well as their preceding scientific techniques) have their own history. This fractional or ambivalent

¹⁴ I refer here to my systematic contribution "'Temporalisation' et modernité politique: penser avec Reinhart Koselleck".

structure of expectation allows and encourages one to further develop the set of questions initially asked by Koselleck in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.

The modern question of utopia has a different goal. In a restricted etymological sense, modern utopias are not “non-places” but future “topoi.” They no longer represent an ideal other place which protects them from the atrocities of civilization, but a different societal time which can be immanently achieved through a different kind of politics. Thus, what Reinhart Koselleck and Lucian Hölscher have called “the temporalization of utopia”¹⁵ reflects modernists’ passage from an “eschatological horizon of expectations” (the immanent acceleration of eschatology as a symbol before the resurrection of the dead) to a “teleological horizon of expectations.” The telos of religious hope was concretized in immanence. Put differently, their *dogmatically religious* destination of yore was replaced by modes of *ethnic* determination (thanks to *immanent principles* and *criteria for justice*).

Starting with the end of the eighteenth century, the societies participating in the process of modernization lived this profound and radical reorganization of their horizon of ideological expectations in more or less dramatic ways. For some decades now, this process has been replaced by a new form of organization and an “a-teleological” or “post-teleological” horizon of expectations, one which corresponds to a global process of “detemporalizing” political utopias. The majority of contemporary discourses on the accelerated speed of the modern world prove that only the social dimension characterizing the previous theme of “historical acceleration” has been maintained: this is an acceleration which no longer has *telos*—it no longer possesses a hoped-for or feared global processual finality, it is lived as an incident among others or even as an insurmountable difficulty, but not simply as hope or as a concrete support of political ability.¹⁶ It remains to be seen whether this should be reason for joy or sadness. Social acceleration, coupled with the evolution of communication technologies and the global structures of the contemporary economy, coincides with the relevant transformation of political culture, i.e., its passage from “heroic modernity” to a “democratic post-heroic”¹⁷ horizon of

¹⁵ Koselleck, “Die Verzeitlichung der Utopie,” 1–14 (resumed in Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 131–49); Hölscher, “Utopia,” 733–88.

¹⁶ Cf. Nassehi, “Keine Zeit für Utopien,” 179–201. See also my study “Le sentiment d’accélération de l’Histoire chez les Modernes: éléments pour une histoire.”

¹⁷ Kittsteiner, *Wir werden gelebt*; Inneraty, *Le futur et ses ennemis*.

expectations. Seen from this perspective, the politics of “negative rise”¹⁸ seem to represent more than an intensified variant of the technocratic-reformist political culture characterizing the era of the “detemporalization of utopias.”

In this sense, I endorse the necessity to distinguish among four regimes of different historicity within political modernity called “régimes d’historicités,” after the coinage of François Hartog¹⁹: the old iterative regime of historicity (*historia magistra vitae*), the Christian-eschatological regime of historicity (*Ancien Régime*), the temporalized teleological regime of historicity (*the era of extremes*), and the present-day detemporalized a-teleological regime of historicity (*the post-totalitarian era of global societies*).

Scientific Transformations

Foregrounding modernists’ new horizon of expectations (the temporalized teleological and the detemporalized a-teleological one) is not enough. We must see to what degree there has been a change in the rapport between retrospective predictive-cognitive aspects and expectative-normative ones. The diagnosis of a “scientific transformation” of political discourses means the modern passage of (religiously-motivated) prophetic prediction towards the (reasoned and pseudo-scientific based) cognitive prediction of immanent becoming. The process of scientific transformation reveals the fragmentary structure of expectation, which it also updates to an unprecedented degree for modernity. Over the passage of time, there are three stimuli of scientific transformation which depend on the political space and follow diverse paces:

Legal codification. A movement of *the legal rationalization* of political order²⁰ characterized the period from the sixteenth-century civil and religious wars (by the creation of independent states and their administra-

¹⁸ Latouche, *Survivre au développement*.

¹⁹ Hartog, *Régimes d’historicité*.

²⁰ In Western Europe, this historical movement covered the period between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries: religious civil wars, the emergence of absolutist states as the only bearers of sovereignty, the formation of new scientific fields about social and state structures (chamber sciences, state sciences, and only later social sciences), the philosophical formalization of the theory of natural law, the redefinition of nations as the only legitimate founders of sovereignty, external and internal mechanisms of exclusion of various segments of the population.

tive apparatus) to the constitutionalization of pluralist democratic regimes (which was done in three stages: 1776/1789, 1815–1848/1918, and after 1945).²¹ During the last decades of the twentieth century a second movement of legal codification occurred, one which was ambivalent and had a different nature. On the one hand, a lot of “subjective rights” emerged; on the other, there were collective claims of “cultural rights” which were partly incompatible with the basic contractual dispositions of modern constitutional democracies.

*Historicization/Sociologization.*²² Ever since the eighteenth century there has been a strong tendency towards the scientific transformation of political discourses thanks to the epistemic tools of history and sociology. Since then, there has been no political program or expectation which would not adopt predictive-cognitive aspects from humanist or social sciences. In other words, modern politics and the ideologies at its basis are rationalized on two levels: that of governing technologies (the apparati of state bureaucracy which became planning futurologists) and that of the horizon of expectations held by agents who are informed through (more or less epistemologically motivated) futurologist assessments. *Top down* (states) or *bottom up* (individuals and/or social groups), agenda and conflicts: all of these are founded upon arguments taken from the analysis of socio-economic structures. That is, too, how decisions are taken on issues of justice, socio-political integration and external geo-political pressure. The more these predictive-cognitive apparati seem to be overturned by one or several subsystems—as it happened, for instance, in 2009, in a very important domain of local economies, that of the globalized system of finances—the more the “crises” which regularly appear in modern politics are prone to becoming confusing.

Biologization. Almost simultaneously with the above-mentioned process, scientific reason started to be characterized by a classifying mode of

²¹ Cf. Reinhard, “Was ist europäische politische Kultur?,” 593–616; *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt*.

²² The following analytic distinction between two reciprocal processes is relevant to mention here:

- 1) *The historicization of the dialectics between the sciences of history and “imagined communities.”* Narrative identities were historiographically founded at the end of the eighteenth century. Their political legitimacy occurred through ethno-genesis and the formation of historiographically sustained legends.
- 2) *The sociologization or rationalization of political action through state sciences, and then, social sciences.* The structures of action are better elucidated. New scientific techniques ensure the exact assessment of predictive-cognitive aspects, which, in their turn, can lead to the intensification of political planning.

operation. Blumenbach's idea of "the impulse/power of formation" or *nisus formativus* (*nisu formativo et generationis negotio nuperæ observationes*, 1781) was transposed to national genealogies.²³ While Johann Gottfried Herder historicized Leibniz's monadology through the concept of *Volksgeist*, his successors, such as Christoph Meiners, straightforwardly developed a differentialist and racial Eurocentrism (*Compendium to the History of Humankind*, 1785; *Studies on Differences Among Humankind*, 1811–1815). With the help of comparative anatomy-related metaphors, historical differences were resemanticized: from romantic organicism which politicized *common law* in England (Burke via Rehberg, Gentz etc.) and the language of organic "historical rights" concerning French natural law and Napoleonic French imperialism, towards epistemic (socio-biological) and political (Social Darwinist) effects of Spencer's evolutionism.²⁴ The process of the historicization and sociologization of political discourses was then left behind by a vast movement of *the biologization of synchronic and diachronic differences* which existed between contemporary and past societies. Henceforth the road was open to a *possible dehistoricization—reontologization* of the empirical sphere and of the horizon of expectations.

The possible rationalization of *normative expectative* aspects which stimulate horizons of expectations derives from the *cognitive prediction* of politics, which becomes more dominant in comparison to previous prophetic futurology. In multifactorial times of crisis (1918; 1929; 1933–1945), this rationalization could not prevent modern politics from giving to the social a new irrational substance due to totalitarian utopias.²⁵

From Orality to Mediality

Independent of processes of semantic evolution (which are associated to the historical variability of political meanings and their linguistic forms), we will have to make a survey of the great changes within "political communication" (changes regarding its concrete spaces, technical means

²³ We must remember the decisive role played by Blumenbach's thought in Kant's case, in aspects of epigenesis through the teleological category of "the power of formation" (*Critique of the Faculty of Judgment*, §81).

²⁴ Guillo, *Les figures de l'organisation*.

²⁵ As the history of the twentieth century teaches us, the impossibility of a complete rationalization of the political field represents the core of Ernst Cassirer's analyses from *Der Mythos des Staates*.

and semiotic forms), because they constitute pragmatic conditions for a possible “persuasive political art.” According to E. Benveniste, this can be defined as a basic unit of political action, and it consists in saying something about something, addressing someone, be it an individual or a group, so as to stimulate them towards taking action with a specific finality. The semantic analysis of discourses means nothing if one does not ask the question “Cui bono?” and if constraints and pragmatic means do not follow. If there are mixed expressions of “orality,” “scripturality” and “iconic mediality,”²⁶ the new cultural history of politics proposes²⁷ that we study the history of “political horizons of persuasion” in relation to the typology of the rapport between *oral speech* (agora, sermon, talk-show, parliamentary discourse), *writings* (graffiti, pamphlets, newspapers, books, etc.) and *images* (caricatures, podcasting). If we hope to optimize historical semantics by a pragmatic argument, we should not stop at the ordinary desideratum for methodological principles. Only an institutional, cultural, long-term history of political horizons of persuasion could satisfy this aspect.

“Nationalization” (From the 1800s Onwards)

The questions in this case are obvious. What were the processes of identity formation which contributed to the definition of rights? Who was defined as bearer of sovereignty and by whom? When and through what kind of processes of inclusion and exclusion could one define a nation? Oftentimes the nationalization of political discourses and the establishment of the national state did not chronologically coincide. There is a dialectic relation between the cultural processes of identity formation and the political-legal history of institutional foundation, and this must be described in relation to each state through the key-concept of “nationalization.”

National political consciousness was born in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic occupation.²⁸ From this moment onward, nations have played the role of a central body attributing identity to politi-

²⁶ These are valid technical terms.

²⁷ Cf. Stollberg-Rilinger, *Was heißt Kulturgeschichte des Politischen?*, 5; “La communication symbolique à l’époque prémoderne.”; Steinmetz, *Politik*.

²⁸ Pomian, *L’Europe et ses nations*. For the French example, see Beaune, *Naissance de la nation France*, and Nicolet, *La fabrique d’une nation*.

cal communities. The agenda of the first generation's political rights can only be articulated in relation to a nation's sovereignty. Given that the industrial revolution destroyed the existent framework of communitarian life and the traditional material base, it consolidated a new political semantics and generated a reactionary (*nationalist* and *agonal*) turn of this first process of the nationalization of units of European political action (*a state's legal claims*).

In some cases, the passage from political discourses to vernacular languages happened simultaneously with this double process of nationalization (which was at first stately and legal, and then agonal). There have not only been temporal differences between the old nation-states and the more recent ones (which politically claim their own state), but also processes of semantic transfer, especially in the case of multi-ethnic states and empires that were losing their influence. Friedrich Meinecke's hypothesis of the *Staatsnation/Kulturnation*,²⁹ according to which the state existed (or did not exist) before the nation, keeps its heuristic relevance as soon as we associate the historical semantics of nations to the new contributions of sociology.³⁰

“Westernization,” “Globalization” and “Deterritorialization”

I will only mention the last global process in this context, one which is obvious from an empirical point of view. It can be understood as:

- “the process of the Westernization” of politics. It includes the waves of the world's colonization from the end of the fifteenth century till the present-day Anglicization covering extensive areas; the essential phenomenon of imports from Western states and the legal codification of political ordering structures from outside Europe following the English model of *common law* and the great continental codification from the nineteenth century;³¹
- “the process of the globalization” of politics. This has happened via the general interconnection among economy, stately spheres of action and political spheres of communication; via the iconic transformation of the political field, the acceleration of symbolical inter-

²⁹ Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*.

³⁰ See Badie and Birnbaum, *Sociologie de l'Etat*; Delannoi and Taguieff, *Théories du nationalisme*; and Delannoi, *Sociologie de la nation*; Roger, *Les grandes théories du nationalisme*.

³¹ Halpérin, *Histoire des droits en Europe*.

actions at a global geo-political level, and the return to national spaces of territorially distant conflicts through a real or imaginary diaspora, such as the present Israeli-Palestinian conflict from French suburban neighborhoods (banlieux);

- “the process of the deterritorialization” of politics. This has occurred following the emergence of non-state agents and the slow-down of the stately non-centralized institution of *governance* etc., and the paradox of present-day “glocalization,” i.e., on the one hand, by the global spread of economic movements and migrations, and on the other, by the strengthening of group identities (the re-nationalization of stable populations in their host-countries and the symmetric re-communitarization of the migratory diaspora).³²

Some Reflections on Historical Semantics and Romanian History (1780–1939)

When one is from France, a country so much attached to the idea of the dwarf and the giant, one can do anything, including the possibility to be at fault and then pay dearly for it since the French have wherefrom to pay. When one is from Romania, a dwarf entangled among three monsters, what can one do to safeguard one's existence and nationality? Monsters dream of measuring their forces every fifteen or twenty years. Do they worry about the poor dwarf on their way? Of course not, they pass and crush it and, on finishing the quarrel, they return to their country and leave it moaning, its four limbs in the air. Then follow the good old ladies of diplomacy which offer their care and wrap it in bandages that soon change to genuine chains. The poor dwarf moans more than ever, while Europe says: “What more can the bawling kid want? Nothing ever seems to satisfy him.” (V. Alecsandri, Berlin Congress)³³

³² Cf. Badie, *La fin des territoires; L'impuissance de la puissance*; also, Colliot-Thélène, “La fin du monopole de violence légitime?,” 5–31; Bayart, *Le gouvernement du monde*.

³³ V. Alecsandri, Berlin Congress, 1878, quoted. in Durandin, *Histoire des Roumains*, 159: “Quand on est la France, qu'on tient comme elle du nain et du géant, on peut tout se permettre, même des fautes que l'on paie très cher, on a de quoi les payer. Mais quand on est la Roumanie, c'est-à-dire un nain enclavé entre trois colosses, que peut-on faire pour sauvegarder son existence et sa nationalité? Les colosses ont la fantaisie de mesurer leurs forces tous les quinze ou vingt ans. S'inquiètent-ils du malheureux nain qui est sur leur passage? Naturellement non, ils passent, ils l'écrasent, et, le pugilat terminé, ils s'en retournent chez eux en le laissant geindre, les quatre pattes en l'air. Alors viennent les vieilles bonnes femmes de la diplomatie pour lui prodiguer leurs soins et le couvrir de bandages qui se changent en véritables chaînes. Le malheureux geint plus que jamais, et l'Europe se dit: ‘Mais que veut-il, ce mioche braillard? Il n'est jamais content.’”

If we ignore the above-mentioned experiment of typologization, and focus instead on modern Romanian history, we will undoubtedly be surprised by the geo-political specificity of the Romanian national destiny: the present-day territory of the Romanian state was formed over the centuries (until the end of World War I) from completely different regions that belonged to the sphere of influence (and the territorial domination) of several empires.

Consequently, the process of forging the Romanian national state was not linear. Considering Romania's geo-political predetermination and its demographic, geographic, religious, and cultural heterogeneity, it is not surprising that the passage towards the national state did not follow the pattern characteristic of Western Europe; it did not occur through direct confrontation between the nobility, the old dominant class that had privileges and was close to the central power, and the new elites of society guiding modern capital economy and representing the third class.

Instead of the structural alternative of revolution vs. Ancien Régime, in the case of Romania one notices a series of interconnected heterogeneous dynamics which can give rise to a wide range of interpretations. *The nation* was not formed in the sense of French *Constituency*, it was not based on modern principles of constitutional law, and it was not declared as sole legitimate bearer of sovereignty. During wars and geo-political disputes in the region it gradually contributed to the state's unity. The War of Crimea (1854–1856) and the Convention of Paris (1858) significantly fostered the desire to unify the principalities around the Danube River; the 1877–1878 war and the battle of Plevna became symbols of the covenant between king Charles I and the Romanian nation; the treaties from Saint-Germain (1919) and Trianon (1920) sealed the creation of Greater Romania. In this sense, geo-political factors contributed to national-state unity to a much greater extent than that acknowledged by the history of political ideas. Conceptual history cannot underestimate or linearly annul these real political factors or their corresponding contingent dimension.

Yet, historical semantics will attempt to identify and ideally assess some processes involving the transformation of socio-political discourses from Romanian territories starting with the eighteenth century.

1. *The politicization of philology* at the end of the eighteenth century was exemplarily proved by many followers of the so-called Ardeal (Transylvanian) School (S. Micu, P. Maior, G. Șincai, I. Budai-Deleanu). It pleaded for equality of rights among Romanians from Transylvania, but it perfectly corresponded to national-states' requisites. Given the

relative lagging behind of the Romanian principalities, it initially corresponded to the ideas characterizing the House of Habsburg and cultivated energetic exchanges with the German-language Enlightenment. The process of politicization acquired new nuances during the nineteenth century, especially after the failure of the 1848 revolution, when the association between liberals and the Hungarian minority as well as the absolutist-political alliance between Russia and the Austrian Empire prevented Romania's passage towards equal rights and political involvement in the long run.

2. *The politicization of philology* generated at least two issues: on the one hand, it showed the *historical-linguistic continuity* between Romanian and Latin-based Western languages; on the other hand, it contributed to the ideological specification of *the Dacian descentance* of Transylvanian Romanians. (This was in contrast with Sulzer's thesis³⁴ and with the Hungarian thesis about the Romans' definitive withdrawal under Emperor Aurelian). They generated a mixed, extremely flexible form of Romanian political-legal discourse, which consisted in arguments about natural rights and historical-legal arguments. Political claims (discourses on equal rights, autonomy and, later, independence) were articulated in relation to the field of strategic action and tactical assessment, taking the form of an *ad hoc* equilibrium between natural rights and historical rights. *This permanent oscillation between non-historical principles of justice and claims of historical continuity* were not characteristic to Romania alone, however they were extremely evident in the context of the formation of the Romanian national state (particularly in border areas which were populated by several cultural-linguistic communities such as Transylvania, Bessarabia etc.). The conceptual pair *neam-popor* (Romanian terms for *kin* and *people*) is an edifying example in this respect (that of an oscillation pragmatically cultivated *ad libitum*).³⁵
3. *The politicization of philology* also stimulated other possibilities of political expression. The thesis of Dacian continuity formally specified a structure of thought which could be called *political-legal legitimacy through history or even ancestry*. Originating in Transylvania in the wake of a dispute between Romanians and Hungarians, this argumen-

³⁴ Sulzer, *Geschichte des transalpinischen Daciens*.

³⁵ Analyses of the oscillation between the concept of *popor* (*people*) in its statal and legal meaning (*populus*) and in its ethnic sense (*neam/kin*) can be found in Victor Neumann's pertinent studies, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*; "Romanian Identity," 39–69.

tative figure of speech could henceforth be used at random, as it happened when members of the Junimea (Youth) Association employed it against the liberal constitution of 1866,³⁶ or later when conservative nationalists (N. Iorga) or even right-wing extremists (N. Ionescu, N. Crainic) employed it against the 1923 Constitution. These criticisms against liberal-constitutional “formalism” in Romania always highlighted the semantic contradiction between *form* and *substance* (Titu Maiorescu.)³⁷ In this contradiction, the substance refers to a certain historical period which contradicts present-day policies depending on one’s ideological positioning (see, for example, the case of N. Iorga from *Byzantium after Byzantium*, who speaks of the Byzantine-Ottoman autonomy of Danubian regions from the Middle Ages until the introduction of extremely formal principles of the legally constituted state in the nineteenth century).

4. Of these two aspects (namely, the permanent oscillation between natural rights and historical rights and political-legal legitimacy through history), various discourse variants result, depending on the confrontation line that can appear between Romanians and minorities or between the various social structures of Romania. In other words, these two basic processes must be *socio-historically and pragmatically deconstructed* as in the case of Wallachia and Moldavia during unionist fights (1856–1861)³⁸ when liberal forces (the lower-rank boyars) mainly used the language of natural rights (*nation* instead of *mother country*) and conservative anti-unionists (the rich boyars) often argued in agrarian-populist and organicist terms.³⁹ What exactly changed in this respect in the united principalities after the 1864 agrarian reform implemented by Al. I. Cuza?⁴⁰ Can one, in the long run, notice a radical shift of emphasis within conservative discourse from the generations of the rich Romanian feudal boyars to the dynasties of the intelligentsia characterizing a society in full process of restructuration through liberalization, industrialization and urbanization? If formulated

³⁶ After 1866, Junimea largely took over the conservative-critical role that had been previously played by rich boyars traditionally oriented towards Russia.

³⁷ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 56; Durandin, *Histoire des Roumains*, 172.

³⁸ This is in keeping with the well-known and widely debated thesis of Zeletin as early as the 1820s and especially after 1925. See Zeletin, *Burghezia română*.

³⁹ See Klaus Bochmann’s study from this volume, but also Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz im Rumänischen*, 145.

⁴⁰ Sandu, *Histoire de la Roumanie*, 156.

ad hoc, i.e. locally, such questions could ensure a viable association between conceptual history and structural history.

5. As far as the processes of linguistic transformation from the nineteenth century (or the end of the Phanariot Era) are concerned, Sorin Antohi⁴¹ has inspiringly evoked three related phenomena that can be summarized under the key terms of *multiple etymologies*, *philological fever*, and *semantic glossary*.
 - a. *Multiple Etymologies*. The diagnosis Alexandru Graur established in 1960 takes into consideration the fact that the Romanian language remodeled itself *at the crossroads of several regions characterized by various cultural influences*. The so-called “intermediary languages” (especially Neo-Greek during the Phanariot Age and Russian starting with the eighteenth century and triggered by Russia’s politics of influence) largely contributed to the development of modern Romanian.⁴² Contrary to the Ardeal School and the linguistic isolationism of some romantics, we can no longer speak of the purely Latin origin of Romanian. While in the Eastern principalities, Romanian remained very close to spontaneous folk language, in the West, the Ardeal School (through Ion Budai Deleanu among others) stimulated a new Romanization and Westernization of the Romanian language. In the long run, it could not prevent *a certain social distinction between the Eastern and the Western forms of the language*. In this sense, S. Antohi speaks of the “paroxysm of linguistic differentiation.”⁴³ In *Légendes démocratiques du Nord (Democratic Legends from the North)* (1854), Jules Michelet recalled nineteenth-century liberal legends that consciously functioned through the Romanian national-state’s movement: Michelet writes that Romanians are in fact “Romans,” “similar to Vergilius’s shepherds,” while “there is no difference between the idioms of peasants and that of the educated people” (*nulle différence d’idiome du paysan au lettré*):

The Moldo-Wallachian language is completely Latin, deserving as much as the Medieval Roman, and even more so, the name that the latter bore: *lingua romana rustica*. This is so since Trajan’s fellow-colonizers [...] kept their charming Virgilian language with increased fidelity since it perfectly responded to their agricultural and pastoral habits. [...] The totally Italian-

⁴¹ Antohi, “Les mots et le monde,” 135–75.

⁴² Boehmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen*.

⁴³ Antohi, “Les mots et le monde,” 137.

like Romanian, so far away from its cradle, isolated and walled among I don't know how many barbarian states, tried to communicate as little as possible with this frightening Babel; it only talked to itself, to its heart and from its own heart.⁴⁴

- b. *Philological Fever*. This should not be placed on a par with the politicization of philology from the end of the eighteenth century. Given the unexpected evolution of reform programs (86 in number between 1821 and 1823), this phenomenon refers to the reciprocal influence between the need for reform and the spontaneous capacity of interpreting one's own language; it considers the diversity of offers and the diverse origins of post-1821 political vocabularies. Seen from this perspective, the "philological fever" indicates *a basic period of transition for Romanian politics*. In other words, *in the nineteenth century, the nation's positionality happened in the context of a more and more intense linguistic self-reflexivity* on the part of mass social classes. Within the medium of their own language, agents saw everything as flux and transformation: the political languages of Old Romanian vs. New Romanian (especially between 1821 and 1849) were in contradiction, just as feudalism and liberalism, or the imperial foreign rule and the national sovereign state were in contradiction.
- c. *Semantic Glossary*. More and more foreign words and concepts began to circulate in the first half of the twentieth century, terms for which there are no semantic equivalents in Romanian. Anticipating the readers' limited horizon of interpretation, authors and commentators felt obliged and even entitled to use notes and parentheses in order to give synonyms or offer complex explanations for a particular way of interpreting the concepts in question. The "semantic glossary"—a combination between erudition, journalism and militancy—also had its own method before the practical introduction of the Organic Regulations from 1831/1832. Thus, in his articles,

⁴⁴ Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, quoted after Michel Cadot's critical edition, 1968, 213–14, 239 and 243: "La langue moldo-valaque est une langue toute latine, qui mérite, autant et plus que notre roman du Moyen Age, le nom que portait celui-ci: *lingua romana rustica*. [Car enfin] les colons de Trajan [...] ont gardé leur charmante langue virgilienne avec d'autant plus de fidélité, qu'elle répondait parfaitement à leurs habitudes agricoles et pastorales. [...] La Roumanie, toute italienne, si loin de son berceau, isolée et murée entre je ne sais combien de grands Etats barbares, est entrée le moins qu'elle a pu en communication avec cette effroyable Babel; elle n'a parlé qu'à elle-même, à son cœur et de son cœur même."

Ion Heliade-Rădulescu used concepts from this codex in view of glossing them for educative purposes. Meanwhile, the Romanian press and magazines became one form of *the public conversational encyclopedia of the period of transition*, a situation that also permitted authors to manipulate the audience to a certain degree.⁴⁵ In hindsight, for the nineteenth century, these glossaries symbolize *the process of the uniformization of a public space that was still largely fragmented*, a space that developed by importation, by permanent interpretation and by the adaptation to local conditions of originally foreign socio-political concepts.⁴⁶

6. *Three different impulses of the legal codification* of the Romanian socio-political language can be singled out during the nineteenth century.
 - a. *The first impulse of legal codification* (post-Phanariot codification). Since prior to 1818 there were no *proper discourses on the constitution*, we might ask ourselves if a codification of absolutist authors representing the foreign (Russian or Turkish) rule was not necessary in order to subsequently develop new socio-political forces which could work in the benefit of political reform and constitutional law. In this sense, what were the roles played by the Code of Calimachi (1817), Caragea's Legifiration (1818) and the Organic Regulations (1831/1832)? Who were the *social spokespersons of these new reformist discourses* that appeared between 1821 and 1859 (were they Russophile rich boyars vs. Phanariots, or lower-class liberal boyars vs. land-owning boyars)?
 - b. *The second impulse of legal codification* (French romanticism). It was during the revolutionary events of 1848 that Western political-legal principles were picked up and politically claimed in Romanian territories. (For example, Jules Michelet's and Edgar Quinet's popular 1840s theories of natural rights were mediated by liberal Romanian students studying in Paris). The process of theoretical-legal transfer was complex and not at all going in a single direction.⁴⁷ Therefore, we cannot speak of passive reception: Romanian

⁴⁵ Antohi, "Les mots et le monde," 152.

⁴⁶ One can have doubts concerning the existence of a common Romanian public space before Tudor Vladimirescu's 1821 movement.

⁴⁷ The process regarding the transfer of natural rights which occurred around 1800 between the Enlightened Viennese absolutism (Baumeister) and the Ardeal School (Micu) represents a chronologically anterior layer of reception which should be studied more minutely. See Micu, *Legile firei, etica și politica*, 1800.

intellectuals and politicians decisively influenced Western public opinions, using their personal networks to offer to engaged intellectuals temporal predictions and historical material on Romania. It was thanks to the feeling of liberal solidarity and a well-directed spiritual mobilization that a work such as Jules Michelet's *Légendes démocratiques du Nord* could be published at the time.⁴⁸ The talented Michelet not only used public opinions from the West but also consciously deplored *summa captatio benevolentiae ex negativo*—their political passivity towards Romania which was painted as “the sacrificed nation” of Europe (*nation sacrifiée*).⁴⁹ He had in mind Romanians' historical destiny whose “white,” Eastern-European look very much resembled the situation of Black slaves in the U.S.:

Charitable people who have shed many tears, endeared by the fate of Blacks, sensitive souls, women-readers moved by the good *Uncle Tom*, haven't you saved any tears for the whites? Are you aware that in Russia, in Romania, and more broadly in the East of Europe, there are over sixty million people who live more desperate lives than the Black?⁵⁰

From the safe distance of their home, moved and affected, Westerners could shed some tears in the case of poignant situations:

This moderate exercise of sensitivity is a further source of joy: “They take pleasure from their tears,” to follow good Homer's right and subtle words.⁵¹

- c. *The third impulse of legal codification* (German romanticism). European romanticism was extremely varied from both a spatial and a temporal point of view. An important role in the field of politics was played by *the French revolutionary tradition of natural*

⁴⁸ Michelet's main sources on Romania were Nicolae Bălcescu, *Question économique des principautés danubiennes*; Gérando, *La Transylvanie et ses habitants*, 1845–1850; Alecsandri, *Poésie roumaine*; and personal contacts or correspondence with Mrs. Constantin A. Rosetti and Dumitru Brătianu.

⁴⁹ Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, 212.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 236–7: “Populations charitables qui venez de verser sur le sort des nègres tant de larmes d'attendrissement, âmes sensibles, lectrices émues du bon *Oncle Tom*, n'avez-vous donc gardé aucune larme pour les blancs? Savez-vous bien qu'en Russie, en Roumanie, en général dans l'Orient de l'Europe, il y a soixante millions d'hommes plus malheureux que les noirs?”

⁵¹ Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, 238 (see *Iliada*, XXIII, 10 and 98): “Et cet exercice modéré de la sensibilité est une jouissance encore: ‘Ils jouissent de leurs larmes,’ mot juste et fin du bon Homère.”

*rights and the German historicizing paradigm of the folk spirit.*⁵² In the nineteenth century, Romania was at the crossroads of these two discourses, and Romanian intellectuals (not least among whom were the Francophile liberals of the 1848 revolution), could thus simultaneously pick up and combine models of argumentation that were in essence incompatible. The reception of Herder's ideas in Romania partly happened *indirectly through partial translations of Herder's oeuvre into French* by Edgar Quinet, all this occurring in the radical-democratic context of the good friendship between Michelet and Quinet. (In this way Herder's ideas were taken over by Bălcescu and Kogălniceanu.) In the long run, *the process of transferring the German model of Volksgeist to the Romanian milieu* seems even more complex if we consider the action of ethnicizing Romanian linguistic consciousness performed by the Ardeal School (for example, by P. Maior). Apart from this aspect, the difficult religious debate over identity between the (United) Greek-Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church repeatedly referred to the concept of *neam* (Romanian for *kin*).⁵³ Even in the case of *the processes of theoretical-legal transfer from Germany and France*, we notice Romania's *oscillation between types of argumentation based on natural rights and the above-mentioned historicizing ones*. According to Paul Cornea,⁵⁴ *the German romantic model* predominated until the birth of Junimea; therefore problematizations regarding historicizing identity-based assignments took center stage over principles of justice based on natural rights.

7. Below we enumerate other *tendencies of transformation* from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which exercised a powerful *structural influence* on Romanian socio-political semantics:
 - a. *Structuring a public common place* by means of the *press* (between the 1830s and 1850s) and *by forming the modern party system* (after 1860), which, in the long run, represented an organizational foray into Romania's political life, on a par with the other modern states. At first accompanied by the *bipolarization* of public debates (liber-

⁵² For a comparative analysis of the French and German sources of Romanian romanticism and the ideological consequences of their influence, see Neumann, "Elitele și problema modernizării României" [Elites and the question of Romania's modernization], *Viața Românească*, 8–9, 2009: 11–19 (editors' note, V.N. and A.H.). For a survey of the ideological context around 1848, see Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*.

⁵³ Neumann, "Romanian Identity," 39–69.

⁵⁴ Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*, 1972.

als vs. conservatives), this structuralization was followed by new social and global challenges, by more profound *distinctions* that went as far as the extremist movements of the twentieth century.

- b. *The emergence of the intelligentsia* as a major agent of culture, administration and politics (in the functional succession of traditional boyar families—see the example of the Brătianu liberal dynasty), as well as its *splitting* following the *bipolarization of political parties*⁵⁵ towards the following main ideological lines: 1. The eulogy of agrarian, patriarchal and voievodal life and an anti-bourgeois, autochthonous, xenophobic, anti-progressivist and Christian-Orthodox attitude (with unlimited variations ranging from conservatives and the followers of Junimea to the legionary movement in the interwar period); 2. the continuation of the 1848 tradition and the cultivation of liberal ideas, the democratic-bourgeois attitude, Romania's pro-Western economic and geo-political orientation, and the support of the country's industrial modernization by continuing to protect the national-state's interests (The National Liberal Party).
- c. *Temporalized messianism*.⁵⁶ In the context of the crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, a strong penchant for "heroic modernism" (Kittsteiner) occurred; this was an activist forcing of the congruence between "the world span and the life span" (H. Blumenberg), one due to the explosive combination between the philosophy of history, the philosophy of Oswald Spengler and livism.⁵⁷ The most conclusive example of this basic tendency was the political volunteerism of Cioran's history, resulting from the universal inferiority complex characterizing "small cultures."⁵⁸
- d. Modern politics' *tendency of secularization*: the secularization of church properties in 1863 and, in the long run, the separation between religious attachments and politics. Nonetheless, the Orthodox Church kept its special identity-generating function. Romania's modern socio-political semantics developed in the transition period between 1860 and 1939 by observing the following *prerequisites*:

⁵⁵ See Siupiu's relevant studies, cited in Antohi, "Les mots et le monde...", 161 and 174.

⁵⁶ Antohi, "Les mots et le monde," 161; he therein talks about the "crystallization of messianism" following the emergence of the intelligentsia.

⁵⁷ Ornea, *The Romanian Extreme Right*.

⁵⁸ See Cioran, *Schimbară la fașă a României*, as well as the studies he wrote for Romanian magazines from Germany after 1933: in his view, Hitler and captain Codreanu would epitomize the historical voluntary congruence between the world span and the lifespan, compensatorily leading to an ever dimmer abominable present.

the union of the principalities in 1859; the end of unionist fights and the (difficult) beginning of a *concrete national-state and parliamentary politics*; the establishment of a *monarchy* and the enthroning of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty (1881); and *Charlism*, as a new semantic resource as well as a target of political debates.

- e. The post-1860 *agrarian reform and struggle for individual rights in point of property* which did not exactly benefit small peasants. Following the industrial and technical modernization of the country, and as an expression of new social tensions from the 1900s (the 1907 peasant revolt and its violent smothering by the liberals), *basic socio-political concepts* increasingly became the subject of public debates.
- f. *Doubling Romania's state territory after 1919–1920*. This moment marked the start of the *crisis of economic, social, religious and cultural integration*. (Among these, the economic crisis referred to infrastructure and to communication networks between the East and the West, the North and the South.) The period was also marked by the fragile and controversial success of the 1923 Constitution in point of making a synthesis between the pro-Western political-legal orientation and Eastern-European Orthodox identity.
- g. *The special status of the Jewish population from 1866 onwards*. The characteristics of these times were the absence of equal political rights (article 7 from the 1866 Constitution represented a regress in comparison to article 21 from the 1848 Islaz Proclamation); the revision of the above-mentioned article 7 during the Berlin Congress (1878); the adjacent political polemics concerning the internal implementation of Constitutional reform, which was once again asked for by outside forces; the massive immigration of Jews at the end of the nineteenth century; the modification of demographic rapports from Moldavia, Bukovina and Bessarabia; the 1899–1901 agrarian crisis and the social tensions between peasants and Jewish-origin agricultural entrepreneurs; *the intensification of social conflicts and anti-Semitism both on the part of peasants and intellectuals* who blamed the Jews for the absence of a Romanian *middle class* and, implicitly, for Romania's *peripheral historical destiny*. All these aspects were at the basis of the 1920s–1930s identity crisis and they would decisively contribute to the emergence of fascist-racist discourses and movements (especially via the semantic contradiction of autochthonism, peasant community, Orthodoxim

- vs. Westernization, liberal modernism and Jewish cosmopolitanism).
- h. *The right to universal vote*. This was a controversy characterizing post-1866 political debates, a milieu in which anti-liberalism and anti-Semitism were developed. In this sense, one could ask: How *representative* (in the sense of effective political participation) are representative democracy and democratic-bourgeois institutions? The suspicion over a modern anti-liberal oligarchy was the main fault that critics and opponents found in the National Liberal Party of the Brătianus.
 - i. *The Bolshevik revolution in Russia*. This resulted in a changed post-1917 ideological situation, especially in exposed border regions such as Bessarabia, and the splitting of the left between reformatory legal socialism and revolutionary communism. Meanwhile, anti-Semitic extreme-right movements increased the danger of communist responses.
 - j. *Cultural mythological balancing syntheses* and compensations which generated meaning to Romania's chronic identity crisis and to its peripheral status from the point of view of universal history. This included the historical semantics of "peasant communities," "the Romanian village" as the "originating place of Romanianism," "the Mioritic space" (L. Blaga), of "Ardeal," "the Orthodox Church," etc. The semantic fields of discourse which refer to Romanian identity must be inventoried in their basic formal structure, ranging from anti-unionist rich boyars to Ceaușescu, and also considering the influence of Junimea members, Byzantine-Orthodox national-conservatives also known as the "1927 generation" as well as 1930s racist movements. *Miorița* has been extensively used since Alecsandri by both the political right and the political left, because its main message and the party's position were ensured by the formula stating that "the nation [is to be placed] before class struggle," making reference to the difficult process of forming the Romanian national state. From a semantic point of view, *Miorița* and *the Romanian village* are the products of different efforts towards a synthesis between the demographic majority, represented by the peasant community, and the intelligentsia, which was deeply torn between being pro-modern or anti-modern, pro-West or anti-West.
 - k. *The biologization* of political discourses. This phenomenon had already appeared in the philological discourse at the end of the eighteenth century (see above). It was, however, directed towards a new

goal through organicist historical philosophies (A.D. Xenopol's⁵⁹ "race" vs. "milieu," N. Iorga's evolutionism, etc.) and through a firm racist re-semanticization of the concept of people and nation in the 1920s and 1930s (see N. Crainic, *Statul etnocrat* [The ethno-cratic state], 1936).

Conclusions

It can be noted that Reinhart Koselleck's historical semantics (especially in its initial formulation in the footnotes to his work *Kritik und Krise*, 1954/1959) was itself a strategy of detemporalization and de-ideologization of modern politics. The latter was formed at the end of the eighteenth century on the ruins of the absolutist state which in its turn—as a dialectical irony—ended the civil and religious wars from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this sense, *conceptual history* seems to represent a moment marking the numberless changes undertaken by modern political practice. It represents a moderate aspect of modern political rationalism, about which Koselleck noted:

Even if it launches out an attack on ideologies, conceptual history will remind us that notions and their uses are more important for politics than its other weapons.⁶⁰

The method of conceptual history implies a critique of language. It directly possesses political relevance and represents a strategy of the de-ideologization and detemporalization of modernity using the tools of historical science. Given its authentic educational function, it cannot remain neutral to values: in pluralist democracies and constitutional regimes of state, *conceptual history* is a constitutive element of political culture, laying the foundations of its own thoughts and action, a permanent reflection on linguistic and ideological premises. Such a political culture requires the education and permanent participation of all the state's citizens, remaining however precarious and dependent on the consensus over stability which is characteristic of any society.

⁵⁹ See, for instance, the polemic between Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol, "Race et milieu," 254–64, and Paul Lacombe, "Milieu et race," 34–55, including my pertinent study entitled: "Épistémologies croisées?"

⁶⁰ Koselleck, "Historische Kriterien des neuzeitlichen Revolutionsbegriffes," 86.

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The Concept of *Patriotism* in Romanian Culture

Klaus Bochmann

The concept of *patriotism* continues to be as controversial as it used to be in the past. Apart from ideologies, it most often refers to a positive phenomenon which mirrors one's emotional ties to one's own state and/or nation. It is different from nationalism, which represents a negative phenomenon fostering the feeling of superiority towards other nations. In *Cugetări postume* (*Posthumous Meditations*), Romanian philosopher Vasile Conta considered that patriotism is "the moral basis of a people [...], without it we cannot conceive of life, let alone of state." Other scholars considered that there is no essential difference between "positive" patriotism and "criticizable" nationalism, especially since people with a patriotic attitude do not disapprove of nationalism.

During its historical evolution since its debut in the eighteenth century, the concept of *patriotism* had an initial positive role, being used as the ideological reason for the implementation of civil rights and the assertion of national sovereignty. The concept first made an ascendant career, being propelled in the foreground of political discourse only to later gradually enter a regressive stage in point of its public meaning. Originating in the Western world in eighteenth-century debates around the responsibility of monarchs and citizens towards the state, the concept of *patriotism* had an initial flourishing period in the political languages of the French Revolution and in their echoes throughout Europe.

In the nineteenth century, not without reason called "the century of nationalities," it was to become a fixed component of national ideologies. In the context of the great conflicts between nations and groups of states in the twentieth century, the concept lost its dominant status and was replaced by other concepts that had a sharper polemical charge, such as *nationalism*, which also opposed *internationalism*. At present, the concept of *patriotism*

has a rather subordinate role: it is more important in those countries that try to retrace the trajectory of nationalization and modernization; this being especially the situation of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, in Western Europe, the concept of *patriotism* is usually associated with a slightly obsolete meaning. After the concept's nationalist-racist overbid during the years of the Nazi regime and throughout World War II, it was Germany in particular which contested *patriotism* as a phenomenon, for which reason this concept hardly ever appears in German political discourses, and when it does, it is only part of the speeches of conservative politicians.

In contrast, when Romanian president Traian Băsescu identified his participation in the appointment of Oltenia's Orthodox Metropolitan on 27 July 2008 as an "act of patriotism" because the Romanian Orthodox Church epitomized the national church par excellence, he was erroneously counseled. Through his gesture, he excluded from among the Romanian nation a large body of the population of Romania, namely the Hungarian, German, Serbian, Rromani, or Bulgarian-speaking inhabitants as well as Greek-Catholics, Roman-Catholics, Protestants, Neo-Protestants, Judaic believers or Muslims. In this way, whether consciously or unconsciously, the president followed that ideological penchant of modern Romanian history which contributed to the country's participation in the catastrophe of World War II and led to the radicalization of the idea (and also the concept) of *patriotism*, which came to be replaced by the ideas of nationalism, autochthonism and Romanianism.

A history of the concept of *patriotism* and its ideological premises, conceptual associations and political implications cannot prevent new abuses of it. It can however contribute to a good reception of historical texts and especially to the more precautionous use of the concept. In this sense, just a limited number of relevant studies on the emergence of the concept *patriotism* during the Age of the Enlightenment and its subsequent destiny have been published. Romanist Werner Krauss from Leipzig was the first scholar to write on the emergence of the concepts of *patriote* and *patriotisme* in 1750 France and their central role in French discourse. In an article published in 1967,¹ he also indicated the synonymy between *patriote* and *citoyen* and *civisme* respectively. In his posthumous work *Begriffsgeschichten*, Reinhart Koselleck analyzed this concept from a European perspective, spanning its usage from the eighteenth century until the present.² Additionally, a special issue of the magazine *Mots (Words)*

¹ Krauss, "'Patriote,' 'patriotique,'" 387–94.

² Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 218–40.

included an analysis of the lexical fields of *peuple*, *nation*, *état*, *pays*, *patrie* (*people*, *nation*, *state*, *country*, *motherland*) as used in France and other countries which put forth a very interesting methodological perspective.³

In my own book on the formation of the modern political vocabulary of the Romanian language, I mainly investigated the evolution of the Romanian concept of *patriotism* between 1821 and 1850 from a philological perspective.⁴ In his PhD dissertation, Jürgen Erfurt was the one who continued to analyze the chronological evolution of this concept until the year 1861.⁵ One should also note here Alexandru Hanță's extensive work from 1976, which was dedicated to the concept of *patrie/motherland*, *mother country* in Romanian literature, even if his approach was too much influenced by ideological reasons, a fact which reduced the value of his study.⁶

The present study focuses on the evolution of the concept of *patriotism* and its corresponding lexical field in Romanian-language political and artistic literature from the beginning of the public debates in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. It traces Romania's destiny from the twentieth century until the present. I mean to show that the heyday of this concept from the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was closely tied to the times' lively debate on the formation of the national state. Today it looks rather obsolete or no longer in common language use.

Some Remarks on the Method of Conceptual History

Any scholar of the until now under-researched Romanian socio-political and cultural concepts should first of all be aware of some methodological premises. Reinhart Koselleck constantly asked questions on this issue.⁷ In my view, the scholar who is not a philologist risks to shift towards a history of ideas and be fascinated by investigating the ideatic universe beyond the surface of linguistic expression that represents the objective and intelligible side of ideas. Do not misunderstand me, though: conceptual history cannot ignore the history of ideas, but it should not identify itself

³ Rémi-Giraud, et al., *Les Mots et la Nation*.

⁴ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*.

⁵ Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*.

⁶ Hanță, *Ideea de patrie*.

⁷ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*.

with it. The level of expression is the only viable proof for the existence of a concept. Writing about the idea of patriotism or even about an author's patriotic mentality is different from writing conceptual history; this latter field presupposes using the concept in a random linguistic form. Thus, for instance, no one can question that Mihai Eminescu was one of the most well known Romanian patriots; nevertheless, in his oeuvre, the concept of *patriotism* is almost exclusively used in contexts in which it has a satirical function and a negative connotation, which requires that these contexts be properly quoted and interpreted. Consequently, there can be no conceptual history without documentary evidence.

On the other hand, we should not allow the text to seduce us, i.e., we have to avoid establishing the existence and efficacy of a concept on the exclusive basis of its *explicit* expression through which we can very easily slip towards a semantic history and the analysis of the meanings of a certain term (*Bedeutungsgeschichte* and *semasiology* respectively). The history of a concept does not always begin with the first mentioning of a term that later becomes familiar, or with its standard name: the concept is often formulated in paraphrases, temporary or approximate synonyms, or even standard formulations which are later replaced by others, such as, for instance, in the case of Romanian, the substitution of *slobozenie* (*liberation* or *freeing*) with *libertate* (*liberty*), *propășire* (*flourishing*) with *progres* (*progress*), *norod* (*the masses*) with *popor* (*people*), etc.⁸ Such substitutions usually indicate new aspects of conceptual meanings, but in its basic essence, the concept already exists. Political ideas are forged during processes in which the drawing up of concepts only occurs in late stages and it implies the imposition of viable standard formulations. Romanian conceptual history is an ideal field for arguing in favor of this phenomenon because the adoption of Romance-Latin terms, especially those of French origin, by politics, society and culture was in many cases preceded by attempts to name them via words that already existed in Romanian.⁹ In this sense, conceptual history lies between the history of ideas and the history of names (so-called *onomasiology*) and takes over a lot of borrowings from both of these sub-disciplines.

Lexicology can additionally offer other methodological benchmarks to conceptual history which are helpful for a rigorous analysis. The relations between the elements of the conceptual field can be represented by means

⁸ Cf. Bochmann, "Dezvoltarea vocabularului social-politic românesc," 869–73.

⁹ I tried to document this process in my articles "Neologie und Neosemantismus im politisch-sozialen Wortschatz" in, and "Naissance d'un vocabulaire."

of (partial or total) antinomy, synonymy (or quasi-synonymy), hyponymy (subordination) or hyperonymy (supraordination). This can substantially contribute to the development of semantic contents. If one is to consider the totality of the conceptual aspects of a text, one should apply a political analysis of discourse, an approach that was elaborated in France in the 1970s especially in relation to Foucault's theory of discourse.¹⁰

***Patriotism* in the History of Romanian Socio-Political and Cultural Discourse. The Social Concept of *Patriotism* in the 1820s**

According to the *Dictionary of Romanian Language*,¹¹ the concept of *patriotism* was used in Romanian under the form of *patriotismos* from as early as the end of the eighteenth century (more exactly, from 1787, in relation to the family of the Văcărescu poets); it meant "a feeling of love for the motherland and people." It can be found even earlier among the representatives of the Ardeal School. It is possible that the term had been used even before that time in political and historiographical works from Danubian principalities which were written in Greek. This hypothesis is suggested by the form of *patriotismos*. A less certain clue could be the phrase *filotimia patrioticească/patriotic phyllotimy* borrowed from Neo-Greek, which appeared around the movement of Heitairia from 1821. As a political term, *patriotism* entered Romanian principalities under the influence of the French Enlightenment and most certainly after the French Revolution.

The earliest uses of the concept of *patriotism* in Romanian can be found in the publications and speeches from the entourage of Tudor Vladimirescu, the leader of an anti-Phanariot folk movement, as well as from his adversaries; these publications were edited in Wallachia in 1821. They most likely represent the oldest documents that have been transmitted to us from the principalities through a public political debate which was (mainly) deployed in Romanian. To a certain degree, this entitles us to date the beginning of the modern conceptualization of Romanian socio-political languages in the Danubian principalities to the year 1821. It is

¹⁰ Cf. Angermüller, et al., *Diskursanalyse*; Glyn, *French Discourse Analysis*; Charaudeau and Maingueneau, *Dictionnaire d'analyse du discours*.

¹¹ *Dicționarul Limbii Române* [The dictionary of Romanian language], The Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, tome VIII, part 1, letter P, Bucharest: Academia R.S.R., 1972.

worth noting that political debates in Romanian had already started in Transylvania by the middle of the eighteenth century.

The speeches, proclamations and diplomatic correspondence elaborated by Tudor Vladimirescu's Chancellery prove the influence of Gheorghe Lazăr, who in his position of secretary was also the most important intellectual counselor of the military leader and agricultural entrepreneur. Tudor Vladimirescu was more clearly endowed with practical military and economic experiences than with a select cultural education and an elevated written language. A native from Transylvania, Gheorghe Lazăr had founded the first Romanian-language modern school in Bucharest. Raised in the national ideology of the Ardeal School and initiated into the ideas of the French Enlightenment, the French Revolution and Josephism, Lazăr used his key-position around Tudor Vladimirescu to direct the latter's folk movement towards national and social reforms.¹²

The concept of *patriotism* is part of a conceptual field which includes at least the agent-noun of *patriot* (Romanian for *patriot*) and the adjectives *patriotic/patrioticesc/patriot* (Romanian for *patriotic*). As in all Romance languages, in Romanian too, an important component which actually represented the conceptual basis of an entire field was represented by *patria* (Romanian for *motherland*) whose German equivalent, *Vaterland*, just like the English *motherland*, is located outside the lexical field or the family of words indicating the idea of *patrie*. This is one of the several cases which prove that histories of concepts are closely tied with histories of national-linguistic names or formulations. In a history of German concepts, the linguistic rapport between *Patriotismus* and *Vaterland* can only be established by going round the (rather obsolete) synonym of *Patriotismus*, namely *Vaterlandsliebe*, which we could leave aside in the case of Romance languages. The concept of *patriotism* cannot be analyzed unless we take into consideration the totality of the conceptual characteristics of the base-word *patria* in each era and in each of the analyzed spiritual movements. In 1821, the concept of *patrie* (Romanian for *motherland*) exclusively referred to the respective principality in which it was applied because people did not yet think politically in pan-Romanian terms. In this sense, a Moldavian document mentions "the land of Moldavia, our *patria* (motherland)."¹³ Alongside the idea of territory, the concept designated the totality of inhabitants from that particular area: "Patria's rights, from

¹² In other words, what is recorded in these documents under the name of Tudor Vladimirescu might well have been the creation of Gheorge Lazăr.

¹³ Oțetea, *Documente privind istoria României*, 19.

those of the boyars to those of its worst and lowest polishers.”¹⁴ Under the circumstances, a *patriot* is nothing else than a *compatriot*, anyone is part of a *patrie* (*motherland*), an idea which appeared in the *Dictionary of Romanian Language* ever since 1773 for both principalities and Transylvanian writers (Gheorghe Șincai, Ioan Budai-Deleanu).

The term of *patriot* kept its original sense for a long time, most likely until 1838; this happened despite the fact that starting in 1821, *patriot* understood as *compatriot* also had synonyms, whether they were fabricated after the Greek model, such as *simbatrioți/simpatrioți* (*simpatriots*) or they represented a “translation” of the French word *compatriot* by *împreună patrioți* (*patriots together*). The concept of *patrie* together with that of *patriot* acquired an unquestionable political connotation for Tudor Vladimirescu himself, something that perhaps happened for the first time in the history of Romanian. In a letter addressed to the boyars from Muntenia, he formulated a question which was to become famous: “How can you account for the fact that *patria* (*the motherland*) designates the masses, and not the lot of thieves?”¹⁵ The phrase of “holy love towards the motherland”¹⁶ which often appeared in his writings received its genuine sense of “love towards the people.” The identification of *patrie* with the people recalls the French Revolution, more precisely the moment when the concept of *patriotisme* had acquired a new, social interpretation, with *patriot* designating the person who was on the side of *the revolutionary motherland*. For Tudor Vladimirescu and his followers, a *patriot* was someone who could be identified with the people and their needs: “We call patriot anyone who is united and shares the same voice with the Christian mass of people in their search for justice.”¹⁷ Opponents were considered “enemies of the motherland.”¹⁸ Because the rival sense of “compatriot” still existed, the political interpretation became explicit in expressions such as “genuine patriots”¹⁹ or “genuine sons of the motherland.”²⁰

Vladimirescu’s political adversaries from among the great boyars also made use of the concept of *patriotism*, but they integrated in it contrary ideas to the goals of the folk movement. In this sense, patriotic feeling

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Aricescu, *Acte justificative*, 75.

¹⁶ Cited by Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*, 168.

¹⁷ Aricescu, *Acte justificative*, 122.

¹⁸ Ibid., 54.

¹⁹ Oțetea, *Documente privind istoria României*, vol. 2, 19.

²⁰ Ibid., 98.

meant a commitment towards abating the movement of revolt: "Those having patriotic feelings should bring to an end all the masses' movements."²¹ Thus, the interpretation of phrases such as "patriotic desire and love" or "patriotic feeling"²² highly depended upon the political horizon characterizing each text producer. Under the circumstances, the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) was closely tied to those of *popor*, *comunitate* and *societate* (*people*, *community* and *society*). Even though they sometimes seemed to have a distant meaning from that of the notion of *patrie* (*motherland*), this kind of synonyms could contribute to a better clarification of the concept under analysis.

During the transition period between 1821 and 1829, after the Peace of Adrianopolis and the Russian occupation, the Danubian principalities entered a new political constellation which favored external emancipation and internal development. A new political literature was born then, one that represented a totally new phenomenon for Romanian history from the point of view of its volume, the diversity of its themes, and the radical nature of its democratic ideas. At the center of this literature one found the propositions and projects for socio-political reforms in Wallachia and Moldavia. They foregrounded how new revolts were to be expected as long as the rural population continued to have an unbearable social situation, which was the direct outcome of the system of Phanariot rule. After the occupation of these regions by the Tsarist Empire, the task of reforms passed into the hands of the Russian military administration, which elaborated and protected the much-criticized Organic Regulation of Wallachia (in 1831) and Moldavia (in 1832).

The post-1821 political literature by bourgeois layers of the small boyars kept the equivalence between *patrie* (*motherland*) and *popor* (*people*), which had also been sustained by Tudor Vladimirescu. A text by Nicolae Grecianu states:

The few ones who serve the motherland by injustices cannot represent the motherland! Meanwhile, the glottis who are forcibly subjugated by the few, they naturally and lawfully represent the motherland.²³

Even the pretension of calling oneself noble was allowed only to the person who had been confirmed as a patriot (and who was therefore close to the people):

²¹ Ibid., 115.

²² Vârtosu, *Tudor Vladimirescu*, 71; Aricescu, *Acte justificative*, 62.

²³ Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*, 208.

You won't be ointed unless you are patriots first! It is not the ointed that make the motherland, but the motherland which makes the ointed.²⁴

The ruler himself was located in the fraught field between patriotism and tyranny when he wrote in an (anonymous) document that:

If he works and successfully accomplishes useful tasks for the motherland's community, he is a patriot, or a father of the masses [...] but if he works against it, he is not a patriot but a tyrant.²⁵

We can notice here certain echoes from Rousseau's *Social Contract* as well as from the debates deployed at the start of the French Revolution, debates which referred to the king's rights and duties.

Pan-Romanian Patriotism around 1848

Around the 1840s the conceptual field of *patriotism* intersected with the national field without losing its social component, yet this latter aspect receded to the background. This happened because of the advance taken by national ideology under the sign of romanticism. National ideology only discovered its pragmatism after the publication of the magazine *Dacia literară* (*Literary Dacia*) starting in 1840, even though it had been visible from the 1820s in the works of enthusiasts such as Ion-Heliade Rădulescu, Gheorghe Asachi, etc. The goal of Mihail Kogălniceanu, the magazine's founder, and his followers, was to construct and consolidate a national culture with all the attributes it implied, especially the creation of a history, literature and national school that were based on a modern and developed national language from the non-publically declared but omnipresent perspective in private correspondence, and to one day forge a unitary and independent national state. It was only in 1848 that people could start speaking and writing about this goal, and only in Wallachia, Transylvania and Bukovina, all this because of censorship issues.

Starting with this program, it was the concept of the *nation* that was placed at the center of political discourse. It occupied a dominant position, one that the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) never did. *Patrie* became almost completely identical with *nation*, though it was less frequently used. The Transylvanian journalist Gheorghe Bariț nicely signaled the quasi-

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

identity between the meanings of the two concepts. His intention was similar to that of Tudor Vladimirescu twenty years earlier, and he consciously paraphrased the latter, writing: "Because we know that large masses make the nation and not just a few persons priding upon their families' long existence on these territories."²⁶ The historian Florian Aaron had established a similar rapport in his 1835 "Foreword" to *Idee răpede de istoria Prințipatului Țării Rumânești* (1835-1838) (*Brief Notes on the History of the Principality of Wallachia, 1835-1838*). Therein, the idea of *nation* had the meaning of a spiritual phenomenon, while *patrie* (*motherland*), which only made limited reference to the respective principality, was understood as a political-geographical space: "A nation without the history of the motherland is lost among the other nations, it sees written inside it, in golden letters, a nation's rights towards its beginning, name and land."²⁷

By analogy to the already invoked overlapping of meanings, *patriotism* was contaminated by association with the concepts of *nationalism*, *national pride*, and *national feeling*, concepts which mainly had positive connotations at that time. They were expressed through the words of *nationalism* or *national feeling*. Even *naționalitate* (*nationality*) or *naționalime* (*national being*) were explicitly marked by their synonyms, *patrioțime* (*patriotic being*) and *patriotism* (*patriotism*).²⁸ Gheorghe Bariț interpreted *patriotism* as meaning "national feeling": "Whoever wants at present to achieve Romanian nationality, to stifle patriotism and to swallow those countries does nothing else than stop the wind with one finger only."²⁹ We can later find a univocal identification between *patriotism* and *nationality* (in its secondary meaning of "national feeling") in I.D. Negulici's 1848 dictionary of neologisms.³⁰

The bearers of national feeling were *patriots*, *genuine Romanians* or *nationalists*.³¹ Once again the title of "patriot" was refused to those who had an anti-social behavior:

[...] those who preach patriotism, i.e., the so-called patriots, put up for auction many gipsy souls and the government then set them free. The government has founded Lancasterian schools in all villages and patriots shout out loud in their

²⁶ Bariț, *Scrieri social-politice*, 52.

²⁷ Cornea and Zamfir, eds., *Gîndirea românească*, vol. I, 142.

²⁸ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*, 91.

²⁹ Bariț, *Scrieri social-politice*, 130.

³⁰ Negulici, *Vocabularu romanu de toate vorbelea*.

³¹ Pantazi, *Viața și ideile lui George Bariț*, 57, 66–67.

congregation that Romanians won't have to do their compulsory service if they are willing to get an education.³²

In one of his *Satires*, the poet Costache Bălăcescu also criticized the so-called patriots who empathized with the peasants while they were simultaneously stealing their money.³³

Patriotism during the Period of the National State Formation

The concept of *patriotism* acquired a new valorification accompanied by a certain shift of meaning during the revolution of 1848–1849. It was then that national discourse and the concept of *nation* became for the first time a major part of public debates. The simple equivalence between *patrie* (*motherland*) and *popor* (*people*) was no longer topical—ever since that moment, the place of *patrie* (*motherland*) has been taken by the concept of *nation* which was identified with the concept of *people* by the most revolutionary of thinkers, Bălăcescu, Kogălniceanu, C.A. Rosetti, etc. The removal of the Russian protectorate and of Ottoman suzerainty over Wallachia and Moldavia, an idea which was expressed with great restraint, the recognition of Transylvanian Romanians as having equal rights with Hungarians, Transylvanian Saxons and Seklers, the emancipation of Romanians from Bukovina; all these issues were part of the series of political claims held by opposing forces and rebels who discussed in their circles the goal of uniting the two Danubian Principalities, also including Transylvania, as it happened at a mass meeting of Romanians from Blaj, on May 2, 1848. In the post-revolutionary period, this set of goals became radicalized and finalized with the Union of the Principalities in 1859.

Under these circumstances, the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) acquired a new meaning, that of “motherland of all Romanians.” Already in 1843, Mihail Kogălniceanu spoke about the new meaning of the concept in his national history course: “I consider my motherland to be the whole extent of land where Romanian is spoken.”³⁴ A social component was added to this perspective in 1848, one having a different role than the national one, and which was asserted depending on the context and the political stand of the speaker. Thus, peasants’ social freedom took center

³² Rădulescu, *Scrisori și acte*, 38.

³³ Bălăcescu, *Satire și pamflete*, 129.

³⁴ Cornea and Zamfir, *Gîndirea românească*, vol. II, 177.

stage in *The Proclamation from Islaz*, a document which was perceived as the constitution of Wallachia's provisional government and which stated: "Henceforth a motherland is waiting for you, and not the foot soldier's compulsory service and the whip."³⁵

In 1848, the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) symbolized national, social and domestic political goals. *Patrie* represented the sum of all ideals, wherefrom derived the often-met formulation according to which it is essential to "create a motherland," "to organize" and "'to acquire one": "Aren't we duty bound to create a motherland, to prepare the means of freeing it [...]?"³⁶; "... we are Romanians, we must organize a motherland, and free the motherland"³⁷; "To acquire a motherland, for a long time we must bear on our backs the cross we have trampled upon."³⁸ Apart from the territorial-identitarian component in which one could find everyone's interests, the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) was defined as follows in the newspaper *Poporul Suveran* (Sovereign people): "The motherland is the equivalent of interests, ideas, and passions which bring together and unite people's identities in view of defending a common good."³⁹

In general terms, the notion of *patrie* (*motherland*) designated a complex and diffuse concept, a constant of the geography of a people understood as a nation. Beyond that, it was a concentration of ideal political, social and cultural representations that differed from one author to another. In the ideology of the 1848 Romanian revolutionaries, it constituted a political myth relatively similar to that of their contemporaries from Central and Western Europe, such as that of Jules Michelet, the best-known French historian of romanticism whom many Romanian intellectuals had met and befriended during their studies in Paris in the 1840s.⁴⁰ It is no less true that Michelet considered that the "People" would acquire the merit to hold the title of *Nation* precisely because it was the result of a voluntary and not an imposed or organic spiritual convergence. In his essay *Le Peuple* (*The People*) as well as in his synthesis *Histoire de la*

³⁵ Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. I, part 2, 152.

³⁶ Rosetti, *Amintiri istorice*, vol. I, 84.

³⁷ Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. I, part I, 271.

³⁸ Dimitrie Brătianu, cited by Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*, , 175.

³⁹ *Poporul Suveran*, no. 3, 9.

⁴⁰ See Michelet, *Le Peuple*, 233: "The motherland and the city are far from being opposed to nature; they represent the unique and all-powerful means for achieving the very nature of the soul characterizing the people living there. The people's soul often gives to the motherland its vital point of departure and the freedom of its development."

France (History of France), Michelet majestically offered those arguments meant to clarify the concept that aimed to define “Western collective identity.”⁴¹ In the case of these political theorizations, Michelet parted with those scholars of his generation from Central and Eastern Europe who had been attracted by the organic meaning of the concept of *nation*, one that could be quickly assumed by the politically yet uncultivated mass of the population.⁴²

The concept of *patriotism* became as complex as that of *patrie* during this period, though it was also more intelligible. Florian Aaron had paved the way to this transformation from as early as 1843 with his publication entitled *Patria și patriotismul* (Motherland and patriotism). His work did not only offer a single, idealist⁴³ definition of *patrie* (motherland), but also defined *patriotism* as a feeling of civic solidarity:

Loving one's motherland, or patriotism, [...] is [...] a noble feeling which implies a loyal penchant and wishing all the best to the citizens alongside whom one lives in society.⁴⁴

Things became more concrete in 1848 when the concept was associated with engagement in the revolutionary goals:

[...] we have embraced the duties of the Administration with the same enthusiastic patriotism characterizing any Romanian determined to sacrifice himself for the liberation and independence of his kin.⁴⁵

From the point of view of the leaders of the revolutionary movement in the Romanian Principalities, all those who became committed to their common goals were *patriots*, they were even *good patriots* or *generous*

⁴¹ Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, 45.

⁴² See “Figurile simbolice și confuziile conceptuale românești” [Romanian symbolic figures and conceptual confusions] and “Ostilitatea față de diversitate sau despre fantezia națiunii organice” [Hostility towards diversity or on the fantasy of the organic nation], in Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, 127–34 and 149–57.

⁴³ One can further read in this respect that, “For civilized nations, the motherland is not only represented by the country and its inhabitants; instead the real motherland is made up of social institutions, establishments, interests and issues that found the common joy of all citizens” (Aaron, *Patria și patriotismul*, 9). And later on: “Indeed, only the best kind of a motherland has the right to ask everything of its citizens, the one in which citizens see their material and moral being ensured, the one which uses civilizational progress and creates the community's joy” (Ibid., 26).

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁵ *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române*, vol. II, 57.

patriots, etc.⁴⁶ The phrase *good Romanians* was also used oftentimes (by Ghica or Brătianu among others); because of this, the fragment of a political catechism by Nicolae Bălcescu entitled *Manualul bunului român* (*The Good Romanian's Textbook*) could be interpreted as a textbook of the "good Romanian," but also that of a "patriot" or "revolutionary." The concept of *nationalism* did not have its present-day negative connotation at the times; it was an approximate synonym of *patriotism*. For instance: "Romanian patriotism and nationalism in opposition to foreign-ism"⁴⁷; "To a large degree, foreign-ism stood for nationalism."⁴⁸ In contrast, the concept of *Romanianism* was less often used as a synonym of nationalism.⁴⁹ In its positive connotation, the nationalist was himself a good patriot, as revealed by such collocations as *good nationalists*,⁵⁰ *nationalist and good Romanian* (Negruzzi),⁵¹ *good patriot and diligent nationalist*.⁵² The central place of patriotism and national feeling in the discourses of the 1848 revolutionaries' movement explains the existence of numerous paraphrasings of the two concepts. In the case of *patriotism*, such paraphrases include the following three Romanian expressions, which represent perfect synonyms for *patriotism*: *amorul Patriei* (*loving the motherland*),⁵³ *iubirea de patrie* (*love of motherland*),⁵⁴ *dragoste pentru patrie* (*love for the motherland*).⁵⁵

No antonym to *patriotism* existed. The concept of *cosmopolite*, which later acquired a negative connotation, was not in contradiction to *patriotism*. According to Negulici, the cosmopolite is "a citizen of the universe which does not adopt any motherland."⁵⁶ As to Aaron Florian, he did not notice any contradiction between the two attitudes.⁵⁷ Yet, he rejected everything that was *foreign* or in contradiction with the national, and not only the above-mentioned *foreign-mania*⁵⁸ and *foreign-ism*. In his last work, devoted to ruler Michael the Brave, Bălcescu stigmatized everything for-

⁴⁶ Ibid., 171.

⁴⁷ Ibid., vol. I, 364.

⁴⁸ *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române*, 373.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁰ Ionescu de la Brad, *Scrieri*, 64.

⁵¹ Quoted from Cornea, "Costache Negruzzi, Montesquieu," 68.

⁵² *Documente privitoare la trecutul românilor din Șchei*, vol. IV, 10.

⁵³ Rosetti, *Amintiri istorice*, 10.

⁵⁴ Kogălniceanu, *Opere alese*, 116.

⁵⁵ N. Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. II, 250.

⁵⁶ Negulici, *Vocabularu romanu de toate vorbele*, 107.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁸ Pantazi, *Viața și ideile lui George Bariț*, 101.

eign as harming the nation: “The foreigner always harms a nation and treating him good is really bad.”⁵⁹

An extremely important stage in the history of the concept of *patriotism* was that of the unionist struggle (1856–1861). Without doubt, the concepts of *națiune* (*nation*) and *unitate/unire* (*unity/union*) with their variants of *nație/națiune/năciune* and *unire* were central. Meanwhile, the focus of the political struggle upon the union of principalities offered the concepts of *patrie* (*motherland*) and *patriotism* (*patriotism*) a central meaning. It is worth noting that terms like *națiune* (*nation*) and *unire* (*union*) almost exclusively appeared in the discourse of unionist forces⁶⁰ that ruled over the discursive field. The anti-unionist forces, also called *separatist forces* at the time, did not operate with the term of *nation* because the latter represented a certain target for unionists of the National Party given its dominant characteristics of language and culture. Their discourse only invoked *Moldavian nationality* that was to disappear after the union with Wallachia.⁶¹

Conservatives limited themselves to the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) and to another one purified of all its social components. Since it was the usual term employed by all political parties, it was combatted as soon as the adversaries to national union gained political weight. Emerging around 1848 as the political credo of reformers’ and revolutionaries’ programmatic writings, the meaning of the phrase “*patria tuturor românilor*” (“the motherland of all Romanians”) stayed valid until the union was fulfilled on 24 January 1859, and it then became a certitude—one which was indeed not shared by everyone. Before and long after that day, Moldavian conservative anti-unionists considered that the motherland was represented only by their own principality of Moldavia. Thus, a political-literary magazine that appeared in Iași between November 1858 and October 1859 was entitled *Patria* (*The Motherland*) and legitimized itself as a neutral observer of the events around the union from 24 January 1859. Though edited by Gane and Dediu, it was the press organ of Gheorghe Asachi, one of the most important promoters of Romanian national culture, who had however taken an anti-unionist stand. In this context, the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) in the title strictly referred to Moldavia.

As far as democratic forces were concerned, a social element became part of the national-territorial interpretation. In his poem *La România* (*In*

⁵⁹ Bălcescu, *Opere complete*, vol. I, 260.

⁶⁰ Cf. Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz im Rumänischen*, 145.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

Romania), Cezar Bolliac noted, “No motherland exists when its people are enslaved!”⁶² The double reference to territory and population makes the term adequate for both national and nationalist discourses and social discourses. By the gradual consolidation of the united principalities, the concept of *patrie* lost much of its relevance. It became secondary and was to be assimilated as part of the register of generally accepted concepts, first and foremost acquiring an ornamental, rhetorical and symbolical value, which was sooner evoked in a pathetic-ceremonial context than in ordinary political language.⁶³

Meanwhile, the controversial concept of *patriotism* became a more and more constant subject of debate in political language. Considering the above, it is obvious that for democrats *patriotism* meant supporting the case of the union, while unionists accused their adversaries of abusing the concept by masking their private or group interests behind patriotism, or even by the defense of the state of the matter in the case of separate states. During the December 1858 elections for the deputies’ chamber, the configuration of which chamber was to decide upon the result of the plan to practically accomplish the union by choosing one and the same ruler for both states, *patriotism* meant taking the right decision: “We must give our vote to the most honest and enlightened people, since honesty is patriotism and can only be held by an enlightened one.”⁶⁴ *Enlightened patriotism* or being a *patriot* did not only mean that national unity brought about the resolution of many political problems. The knowledge of these rapports had a moral connotation of being “honest” and not following one’s own interests from behind a *fake patriotism*.

“Enlightened” and “full of abnegation/disinterested” were two elements that constituted the concept of *patriotism*, just as its contrary term called by Mihail Kogălniceanu “the narrow [...] belfry patriotism,” was characterized by party interests and egoism. As the prime minister of the united principalities and the initiator and passionate champion of Alexandru Ioan Cuza’s political reform, Kogălniceanu, exclaimed: “Sirs! Let us not let narrow ideas lead us to a narrow path. Belfry patriotism has caused the death of many renowned countries.”⁶⁵ He continued: “Their patriotism only extends to asking and not to giving; Romanian aristocracy is rusty,

⁶² Cited by Erfurt. *Ibid.*, 159.

⁶³ This explains why the concept of *patrie* was rarely used after 1859; cf. Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*, 158.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

deaf and dumb.”⁶⁶ The opponent party defended itself through the accusation that liberal democrats and radicals around C.A. Rosetti claimed monopoly over *patriotism*; they published this accusation in the newspaper *Conservatorul progresist* (The progressive conservative) from 25 December 1860. They held that it was wrong to believe that peasants would become patriots if they were given land-ownership rights: “Let us presuppose today that we have patriotized all the peasants by giving them the lot of land that constitutes the sign and measure of patriotism [...]”⁶⁷ The verb *to patriotize* represented a neologism which was not going to last.

Patriotism Based upon Ethnic Principles

In the following period, this concept was prone to acquire different interpretations. The national poet Mihai Eminescu was to only ironically use the concepts of *patriot* and *patriotism* to reprove the so-called patriots. Becoming politically affiliated to the conservatives, he especially detracted the opponent liberal party members whom he accused of abusing the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*) and of presenting themselves as patriots. His best known text, in which he criticized the meaning attributed to *patriotism* by the liberals, is *Scrisoarea a III-a* (The third letter), where one can read, for instance: “Au de patrie, virtute nu vorbește liberalul / De ai crede că viața-i e curată ca cristalul?”; “Patrioții! Virtușii, ctitori de așezăminte / Unde spumegă desfrâul în mișcări și în cuvinte.”⁶⁸ (“Liberals speak of motherland and principles / So you would believe their life’s as clear as crystals”; “Patriots! The virtuous builders of places / Show their debauchery in movements and phrases.”) For Eminescu, the patriotism within public discourse was a substanceless phrase, a purely declamatory element, since he wrote in newspaper *Timpu* (Time) from 23 May 1881 that “it is but becoming and expected that the era of patriotism be ordered to disappear in darkness.”

Even though Eminescu used the terms of the lexical field of *patriotism* with an exclusively negative connotation, he had his own implicit concept of *patriotism*. Just as many other no less renowned Romanian intellectuals from the second half of the nineteenth century—Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Costache and Iacob Negruzzi, Simion Bărnuțiu, Vasile Alecsandri,

⁶⁶ Ibid, 161.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 162.

⁶⁸ Eminescu, *Opere*, vol. I, 150.

etc.—, Eminescu's view of *patriotism* was based on ethnic principles. He particularly blamed the Greek, the Phanariots' successors, for all the negative aspects of Romanian history over the last few centuries (he extensively wrote on this margin in his article "Elenismul" ("Hellenism"), which was published in *Curierul de la Iași* (The Iași Courier) from 10 October 1876). In his view, the Greek reclaimed *patriotism* for themselves: "Tot ce e perfid și lacom, tot Fanarul, toți iloții, / Toți se scurseră aicea și formează patrioții" (*Scrisoarea a III-a*) (All those treacherous and greedy, all the Greeks, all the Phanariots / They streamed down to our region and became the patriots) (The third letter). The above-mentioned poem often contains accusations towards the Greek as well as the Bulgarians, who had spread their numbers throughout Romanian society and claimed to be Romans: "Și apoi în Sfatul țării se adun' să se admire / Bulgăroi cu ceafa groasă, grecotei cu nas subțire. / Toate mutrele acestea sunt preținse de roman, / Toată greco-bulgăria e nepoata lui Traian" (Thick-naped Bulgarians and slim-nosed Greeks crowd our councils, / They do that only to admire their countenances, / They all claim to be descendants of a Roman, / All the Greek-Bulgarians are nephews of Trajan).

Being a belated romantic, Eminescu was tributary to the image of a society that he conceived to have been created out of an idealized national past, when principalities were still justly and wisely governed by autochthonous voievods, when boyar families still ruled patriarchally over their peasant subjects and when armies were largely drafted from among free peasants in wars against the Turks and Poles. In this view, first Greek-origin Phanariots and later francophone liberals destroyed the society; meanwhile the author perceived a new danger coming from the "parasitic growth of the Jewish element"⁶⁹ which occurred to the detriment of the Romanian population. In his 1878 article, "The New Free and Independent Romania," written after the country gained its independence, he noted: "The new kingdom established thanks to Romanians' heroism has a small flaw—it eats Romanians and gives birth to foreigners and patriots by profession."⁷⁰

Ion Luca Caragiale held a similar, though less ethnicist attitude; the ostensibly flaunted *patriotism* of both "historical" parties, the conservatives and liberals, representing a constant trait of his satire. This was why people often castigated him as not being a patriot, to which he responded in his characteristic style:

⁶⁹ On Eminescu's xenophobia and particularly his anti-Semitism, see Dumitru Murărașu, *Naționalismul lui Eminescu* [Eminescu's nationalism] (Bucharest: Pacifica, 1994), 109.

⁷⁰ Cited by Hanță, *Ideea de patrie în literatura română*, 136.

[...] Many ignorant or malevolent men have wanted to make me appear in front of the public opinion as lacking patriotism because of what I have said in light of knowing false movements. I am not kidding: irony and jokes are perfect sterilizers for spinach cultures: wherever they are spread, spinach ceases to grow [...]⁷¹

Caragiale recognized that he was a patriot in fact, but one of a different kind. He did this in an article published in German in the Viennese newspaper *Die Zeit* from 3 April 1907, and entitled “Romania as It Is through the Eyes of a Romanian Patriot.”⁷² In a letter to his son Mateiu, the writer spoke about the abominable events of 1907, events that stimulated him to bequest his love to the motherland as a legacy to his son: “Let the circumstances through which our country has passed and which deeply sadden my old age urge you to love the motherland.”⁷³

A historian, philologist, poet and political analyst born in Bessarabia, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu also employed the concept of *patriotism* on the basis of ethnic principles. Yet, in contrast to Eminescu and Junimea (the Youth Movement), he had a positive approach to the concept, which he firmly upheld. He categorically rejected a “purely animal patriotism,” or the feeling of social security and aspirations towards the material prosperity of his own country (labeled as a “miserable mercantilism!”) as basic principles of *patriotism*. In that, he distanced himself from some traditions of patriotic thought and accepted one fact only—aspiration towards national grandeur:

Undoubtedly the genuine patriot cannot help but rejoice in seeing his own land mirror the look of the most blossoming garden, but he directs this so-called raw part of his love to a much higher aspiration containing the entire superiority of human nature, the only kind of aspiration that has a right to claim the sacred name of patriotism: national grandeur.⁷⁴

A total negation of *patriotism* was represented by *cosmopolitanism*, which Hașdeu saw epitomized in “a-national” states like Switzerland and the US. His *patriotism* could be termed ethnic because it derived from the national character on which the country’s political constitutionality⁷⁵

⁷¹ Caragiale, *Jurnalul nostrum*, 283.

⁷² I refer to the German-language version of his writing “1907 – Spring through Autumn.”

⁷³ Cited by Hanță, *Ideea de patrie în literatura română*, 150.

⁷⁴ Hașdeu, “Patriotism și neîncredere” [Patriotism and insecurity], in *Scieri literare, morale și politice* II, 169.

⁷⁵ Cf. to his article, “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunii sale” [The character of Romanian nationality as the basis of its legislation], in Hașdeu, *Scieri literare, morale și politice* II. 164–8.

should be based, one which he was the first to attribute to the Dacian legacy. Like Eminescu, he was an anti-Semite and a Greekophobe. At the end of the 1860s he established the society *Românismul* (Romanianism), whose function was to “fight in the name of the national principle against cosmopolitan usurpation.”⁷⁶ Behind his *patriotism* there lurked an *ideal nationalism* which was almost mythical and critical to the idea of progress:

Progress can reach an acme without nationalism, but that would only be material, raw, calf progress. [...] Nationalism is an essential condition of all great creations from the sphere of ideas. What originality represents for the individual, nationality is for a people.⁷⁷

“The Critical” Patriotism of Junimea and the Response of *Contemporanul*

Just like Eminescu, the most representative members of the literary association Junimea hardly ever used the words *patriotism*, *patriot* and *patriotic*. Yet, they considered themselves as being Romanian patriots. Like the poet, they felt obliged to be verbally restrained on this issue in response to the ostentative flaunting of patriotism by the adverse liberal party. In this sense, in 1871, the historian Alexandru D. Xenopol characterized as follows the attitude of the magazine *Convorbiri literare* (Literary conversations), the press organ of Junimea:

Truly, *Convorbiri literare* do not at all contain the national element in the meaning ascribed to it by those who accuse us of lacking it. Patriotic declamation with or without reason, proofs that we are of purely Roman descent because Trajan eradicated all the Dacians, invoking Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave on all occasions, the elevation of our people above what it really is in point of the present-day condition of our literature which has supposedly reached its climax, complete hatred for whatever is of another origin and for our natural enemies—all these, indeed are not found within our pages.

In opposition, Xenopol formulated the principles according to which a literature could contribute to the formation of high quality *patriotism*:

⁷⁶ Hașdeu, “Cauzele și rezultatele cosmopolitismului” [Causes and results of Cosmopolitanism], in *Scriseri literare, morale și politice* II, 120.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 123.

1. Spreading a genuine critical spirit; 2. Encouraging the progress of national literature and combatting literary charlatanism hidden under the mask of a fake patriotism; 3. Upholding the intellectual independence of our people and hence combatting the imitation of foreign ways.⁷⁸

Xenopol believed that *patriotism* was one of a people's highest feelings, and he wanted to use this concept for those clearly rare occasions when it was suitable:

Patriotism is a great and holy thing, and like all great and holy things, it should be kept in the high spheres where it moves. As such, it should become the content of literary productions only during the important moments of a people's life, when deep inspiration makes one's soul bounce.⁷⁹

It should be self-understood that the accusation of cosmopolitanism to which Junimea was exposed had no real basis, so that the leader of the group, Titu Maiorescu, found it easy to reject it in his programmatic article from 1872, "The New Direction of Romanian Prose and Poetry":

The truth is that cosmopolitanism does not seem to exist throughout the whole of Romania, or at least not in point of Junimea from Iași, if under this term one understands the beautiful utopia of trying to find the joy of humankind in commonly constituting it alongside the negation of national individuality. No single article from *Convorbiri literare*, broadly speaking, nor any single sentence I have written or spoken mentions cosmopolitanism; I and the other members from Junimea from Iași are the partisans of the idea of nationality and have always expressed ourselves to that respect.⁸⁰

The accusation of cosmopolitanism resulted from the above refusal to make patriotism a subject or reason for literature, as Titu Maiorescu himself had repeatedly underlined: "True enough, patriotism as an aspect of political action is not an art subject no matter how many digressions have been and are still committed against such a simple rule."⁸¹ Let us start from the premise that the magazine *Contemporanul* (Contemporary) (1881–1891) held a fundamentally critical stand towards the concept of *patriotism*, based upon a socialist-inclined ideology and, as such, upon a rather internationalist position. If we take into consideration Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea's dispute with *Convorbiri literare*, such a supposition

⁷⁸ Ibid., 113.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Maiorescu, *Criticele*, vol. I, 195.

⁸¹ Maiorescu, "Poeziile lui Octavian Goga," in *Criticele*, vol. II, 458–68.

is not adequate because he did not accept excluding the theme and stand of patriotism from literature under condition that this was an authentic creation with artistic pretensions; otherwise, the text would degenerate into parody.⁸² Simultaneously, he did not abstain himself from naming patriotism as one of the highest virtues for which he cited important examples from universal literature: Dante, Alfieri, Thomas Morus and others who “deserved the most glorious crown, the crown of patriotism.”⁸³

What happened here was a rehabilitation of the concept of *patriotism*, which was repositioned at the very center of artistic literature. The heyday of this perspective can be found in the literary critical works of Alexandru Macedonski, a symbolist who laid great emphasis on pretentious artistic creation and who attributed an important national-educational mission to literature, just as Ion Heliade Rădulescu equally intended in his time through *Curierul de ambe sexe* (Courier of both sexes). According to Macedonski, *disinterested nationalism*, which was a synonym for patriotism, was one of the ingredients of high literature: “For their times, *Curierul de ambe sexe* and *Literatorul* [his own magazine] will remain the uncompromising banners of pure art, high literature, and disinterested nationalism.”⁸⁴

A basic issue in the history of Romanian ideology can also be noted in the polemic between Maiorescu and Gherea. This was later indicated by Eugen Lovinescu in *Istoria civilizațiunii române moderne* (History of modern Romanian civilization). He spoke about the scission of Romanian intellectuals in two groups: on the one hand, there was a past-oriented group who commended agrarian, patriarchal or old voievodal life, was disposed to fight against the bourgeoisie and progress, and had a profound xenophobic penchant, harshly criticizing the 1848 tradition the liberals continued; on the other hand, there was a group which was in principle

⁸² The following passage from an article addressed to Titu Maiorescu is extremely relevant in this sense (namely, “Personalitatea și morala în artă” [Personality and morals in art], in Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Studii critice*, vol. I, 30): “When in our national and patriotic dramas of the last war, soldiers and peasants from the keeps of Grivița made patriotic speeches, those most clearly represented a parody of art and not art itself because they told lies. The Romanian peasant would never give speeches for no reason, least of all would he have done that when he was dying of cold, hunger and bullets in Grivița. [...] Should we blame patriotism for this? [...] Like all other manifestations of individual and social life, patriotism could be the subject of an artistic work just as its treatment must not at all necessarily be truly artistic.”

⁸³ See the article “Tendenționismul și tezismul în artă” [Tendentism and thesism in art], in Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Studii critice*, vol. I, 80.

⁸⁴ Alexandru Macedonski, “Cuvânt inițial” [Foreword], in *Literatorul*, VII, 1892, no. 1.

oriented towards bourgeois democracy, political and economic modernization, and Romania's integration to the European representations of value and its economic circuits.

The critique towards the ostentative presentation of patriotic motifs in literature was followed by scholars' focus on themes related to the past as they were seen by most Romanian authors at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The heroic deeds of exemplary rulers like Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Mircea the Old, etc., served as models for patriotism, while the Romanian village was a model for the ordinary hearth. The difficulties surrounding the creation of a Romanian "city novel" were undoubtedly conditioned by this negation of the present and the manifestations of fake patriotism. Mihai Eminescu's literary credo could be felt everywhere. It was also part of the ideological basis of magazines such as *Revista Nouă* (New magazine), *Vieața* (Life), *Vatra* (Hearth), and especially *Sămănătorul* (Sower); it could equally be found in historical and rural prose and in the dramatic art of Hașdeu, Slavici, Vlahuță and Delavrancea, this representing a tendency which would be continued in the second half of the twentieth century, especially in the comprehensive epical oeuvre of Mihai Sadoveanu. All in all, at the beginning of the twentieth century one could see a gradual replacement of the concept of *patriotism* by its partial synonyms which had a more colorful and aggressive semantic-pragmatic load: *nationalism* and *Romanianism*.

The Concept of *Patriotism* in the twentieth Century

The various meanings of the concept of *patriotism* which appeared throughout the nineteenth century represented a source of inspiration for Romania's political and intellectual elites even in the twentieth century by their direct appeal to precursors, in the sense of an original modernization, or by borrowing, depending on their orientations and socio-political needs. It is this ideological advance of the nineteenth century that also justifies our endeavor to fix the central point of analysis during this period. We could also add a fact we have already highlighted several times, namely that the concept of *patriotism* was no longer too fashionable in the twentieth century, becoming a subsidiary part of political discourse.

There are three directions one could identify in the twentieth century, some of which took over and extended initial suggestions, sometimes transforming them into extreme orientations:

1. First, there was an anti-Western, anti-democratic, ethnic-based, autochthonous patriotism with Christian (Orthodox) valences which found its expression in the magazine *Gândirea* (Thought) and in the movement formed around Nae Ionescu respectively, serving as ideological legitimization for the legionary movement. Its followers rejected the ideological tradition of the 1848 revolutionary movement, “the 1848 spirit” becoming the “black sheep” for Nichifor Crainic, Mircea Eliade and others.⁸⁵ Nae Ionescu also highlighted this:

Orthodoxy, nationalism, monarchy, on the basis of which one of our generation is identified from among a thousand—these are nothing else than absolutely necessary conditions which make possible the true life of the spirit [...]. This is what our ancestors don’t understand, they who represent the sad generation of the liquidation of a culture which was never theirs and, by that, was not even cultural.⁸⁶

In political discourse, the place of *patriotism* was taken by *nationalism*, which was a slogan-word and synonym for *Romanianism*. The latter term had already been used by Nicolae Bălcescu and subsequently it was employed constantly albeit with some reserve. Even the ethnonym *Romanian* became a qualitative concept, as Nae Ionescu remarked in his article, “To Be a Good Romanian.” Thus, “genuine Romanians” were necessarily Orthodox Romanians. Greek-Catholics could also be considered “good Romanians,” since “to be Romanian, not a ‘good Romanian’ but Romanian purely speaking, meant to be Orthodox.”⁸⁷ Only few people among the above proposed to radicalize such ideas and transform them into racism. For instance, in an article from Manolescu’s magazine *Lumea nouă* (New world), a certain Al. Randa had identified the concept “Romanianism” as meaning “Romanian racism [...] naturally based on the Aryan myth.”⁸⁸ If one was to start from the premise that there was a concept of *patriotism* used by the Romanian extreme right, this patriotism would necessarily be exclusivist; it would therefore exclude those who were religiously and ethnically different from Orthodox Romanians.

2. A *patriotism* of cultural, political and social modernization developed in reaction to the political right’s nationalism, one that claimed itself from the 1848 ideology and promoted harmonization with Western Europe. Its representative during the first decades of the twentieth century

⁸⁵ See Ornea, *Anii treizeci*, 27, 33.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

was Eugen Lovinescu, with his concept of synchronization. In competition with *gândirism* (an ideological and political movement in interwar Romania revolving around *Gândirea* magazine) and with other nationalist extremist movements, the concept of *patriotism* was used as indicated above, but also in the sense of a positive, non-exclusivist nationalism, as one could notice in the case of Mihail Ralea who foregrounded the compatibility of this type of nationalism with democracy:

Not only is there no possible antinomy between democracy and nationalism, but nationalism is an invention of democracy. One cannot talk about patriotism prior to 1789. [...] The nation, the principle of nationalities, ethnic specificity have all come out of the great French Revolution and the modest ideology of the bourgeoisie. [...] We could go on and note that only democracy can be truly nationalist. [...] Only wherever one manifests the love for one's country through free adherence to the great majority can one speak of an authentic national consciousness. A just and comfortable democracy for all intensifies one's attachment to the motherland.⁸⁹

Here we get three synonyms for patriotism: *love of one's country*, *an authentic national consciousness* and *attachment to the motherland*. The above quote shows that in the case when patriotism is based on democracy, the line between patriotism and nationalism is blurred. A broader consensus regarding the continuation of that orientation, which would have at its center the socio-political model of rapprochement towards Western Europe, seems to have only been formed after 1989; the post-World War II decades being characterized by an Iron Curtain-imposed isolation. The post-1989 pro-European orientation was crystallized around the slogan of a "return towards Europe"⁹⁰ and was officially concretized in Romania's accession to NATO and the European Union. The meaning attributed to the concept of *patriotism* is undoubtedly related to the political convictions of those who use it. The initially quoted words of this article belonging to president Traian Băsescu show an alarming rapprochement of the idea of patriotism to its nationalist and exclusivist sense.

3. The clearly social meaning of *patriotism* was promoted in postwar Romanian society to the extent to which the national cause was subordinated to the social sphere. At first, during the Soviet stage that lasted until the mid-1960s, the model of *socialist patriotism* was an essential part of

⁸⁹ Ibid., 66.

⁹⁰ This was the emblematic title of a collective volume edited by Adrian Marino, *Revenirea în Europa* [Return to Europe] (Craiova: Aius, 1996).

proletarian internationalism, a model that foresaw the subordination of patriotic thoughts and feelings towards the evolution of the international communist movement under the leadership of the Soviet Union. Internationalism and patriotism were no longer perceived as opposed, they were seen as complementary. Through this, *patriotism* became a concept subordinated to internationalism (a hyponym). If in our conceptual field there was a contradiction that can be interpreted in strict antagonistic terms because of its association with class interests, the contradiction was certainly that between *patriotism* and *cosmopolitanism*. The latter concept has always had a fatal anti-Semitic touch.

In a first postwar stage, the concept of *patriotism* was nationally neutralized and totally subordinated to the dominant ideology. Thus, in the official party magazine *Lupta de clasă* (Class struggle), a patriot was imagined as an individual whose relation to the motherland did not count:

The one who does not unflinchingly fight against the imperialist ideology, that of the inciters to a new war, could not be a true and honest patriot, a true and honest fighter for the cause of peace and socialism.⁹¹

After the nationalist excesses of the 1930s and during World War II, *patriotism* could only be thematized in these “embarrassing” forms, as it also happened in point of harmonizing it to the meanings of (an obviously socialist) democracy. On the margin of workers’ patriotism, one could read as follows from page 6 of *Contemporanul* (*The Contemporary*), no. 84, from 1948: “Working people’s patriotism is a constructive one which inspires the most progressive democratic principles.”⁹²

Nicolae Ceaușescu was the one who put an end to this internationalist (or better said non-nationalist) vision that was favored by external forces. For a while, he managed to convince intellectuals and a part of the population to accept a consensus with his regime by invoking a socially determined patriotism which was supposed to be integrative and without a marked ethnic character (because it included minorities at least at the level of declarations). This kind of patriotism was based on the newly built myth of a glorious millennium-old history as well as on the illusion of a modern Romania, one which was independent and internationally respected. In fact, this was an attempt to erase the traditional contradiction

⁹¹ Quote from *Dicționarul limbii române contemporane* [Dictionary of Romanian contemporary language], vol. III, (Bucharest: Academia R.P.R., 1957), 340.

⁹² Cited by Sasu, *Dicționarul limbii române de lemn*, 95.

within the definition of *patriotism*, that between a nationalist interpretation and a modernizing socio-cultural claim: simultaneously with the constant eulogy of its (real or invented) social and civilizing successes, the Ceaușescu regime presented Romanian history from as far back as Dacian times under grandiose forms, all this in view of self-glorification and the “patriotic” manipulation of the masses.

In Ceaușescu’s speeches, using the concept of *patriotism* happened only in the background, in keeping with the already-mentioned tendency. He would instead more often use the concept of *motherland*. In his last speech from 22 December 1989, which was radio and TV broadcasted and lasted for no more than 10 minutes, he used the term of *patrie* (*motherland*) 25 times in contexts like “our socialist motherland,” “the development of our motherland on the path of socialism,” and “the independence, sovereignty and integrity of our motherland.” These examples could be understood as symbols of an extreme pathos during those fraught days Bucharest and Romania were going through. At the same time, they could highlight connections with the two important reference points for the concept of *patrie* (*motherland*): the social dimension, which finds an echo in the favorite term of *people* seen as a whole (“the whole people / the people as a whole”), and the national one. In opposition to this usage, The Front of National Salvation which invoked the *patriotism* of the armed forces foregrounded the idea of country and not that of motherland. During the revolution and for some years afterwards, wooden language still weighed heavily on the Romanian society, explaining people’s restraint from using it yet again.

Conclusions

The uses and interpretations of the concept of *patriotism* in Romanian culture have followed the general lines of international, especially European development, but they have also simultaneously maintained a degree of national specificity. Being a concept based upon the sensitive area of individual and collective identity, *patriotism* is particularly exposed to political differentiations and their discursive deployment. Given this, it facilitates an analysis of the entire spectrum of ideologies to a higher degree than basic political concepts.

In light of this, can we still assert that there exists a generally accepted concept of *patriotism* despite Romania’s troubled history and its ever-changing political regimes and dominant groups? To answer this question

we would need to undertake other thorough forays, and we hope that Romanian society will draw and disseminate a well-grounded democratic and non-nationalist concept, especially since no important political force of the twentieth century managed to bring the great ethnic groups incorporated by Romania after the end of World War I under the umbrella of an “extended” concept of patriotism (of the type of German constitutional patriotism). Not even the concept of *modern, bourgeois-democratic patriotism* managed to do that, and even less so the concept promoted by Ceaușescu. The measure of this failure is given by the German populations’ mass emigrations out of Romania and by the persistent tensions between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority.

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Romanian Liberalism (1821–1866)

Keith Hitchins

This paper investigates the evolution of the Romanian concept of *liberalism* between 1821 and 1866, from Tudor Vladimirescu's movement in Wallachia to the creation of the *Cărvunari Constitution* in Moldavia and up to the promulgation of the first Constitution of united Romania in 1866.¹ It was during this half century that the coherent expression of liberal principles emerged, a process that was accompanied by and dependent to a certain degree upon the changes undertaken by the Romanian socio-political language. This period served as a launching platform for the concept of *liberalism*.

The investigation of the political ideas that have come to be known under the term of *liberalism* must include a study of the meaning of the concepts *liberal* and *libertate* (Romanian for *liberal* and *liberty* or *freedom*) which are two fundamental components of liberalism. In this sense, my main aim is to examine the shifts of meaning undergone by the concept of *liberalism* between 1821 and 1866 and to trace its evolution and its place in everyday language. I will also tackle the issue of why and how these changes occurred, who made them, and what could be the relation between socio-political changes and the concepts and words that were used. For instance, what is the meaning of the passage from *slobozenie* to *libertate* in order to designate the concepts of *freedom* or *liberty*?

In general, the liberalism of the modern society is an ideology which emphasizes individuals' civil and political rights. It sustains citizens' fun-

¹ I am particularly grateful to my research assistant, Pompilia Burciă, for her invaluable assistance in writing this paper. I am also grateful to my friend and colleague Victor Neumann for the close reading of this text and the suggestions he provided.

damental freedoms—of conscience, free expression and association—and insists that the state should not intervene in the exercise of these rights, with the exception of situations when it must preempt possible causes of prejudices. Broadly speaking, liberals are opposed to the political institutions and social relations of the old regime and they make efforts to introduce fundamental reforms adapted to the specific locale and temporal conditions. They sustain political freedom and equality before the law, they are against the defenders of privileges, and insist that the government adhere to a fundamental law, a constitution that would guarantee citizens' rights and ensure the individuals' protection in the face of free will. Liberals also support the investigation of controversial aspects and the need to observe differences of opinion; they believe that truth and its meaning will come to light by means of open debates that will lead to a better society. Many liberals are opposed to the state's artificial intervention to economic problems and sustain the free exercise of market laws. Other liberals believe that the functioning of capitalism should be regulated in order to protect the weak and offer them equal chances. The difference between the former group of classical liberals and the latter group, most often referred to by the terms of equalitarian liberals, suggests the difficulty to reach a commonly accepted definition of *liberalism*. The concept has been changing as the political and economic circumstances and the intellectual climate have evolved. Thus, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, liberalism embraced doctrines such as free trade. Towards the end of the century, the new liberalism considered that the state should intervene in the economy in order to improve the material condition of the poor and allow them to enjoy basic citizen freedoms. Another example would be anti-clericalism: in some countries, such as nineteenth-century France, this was a component of the liberal creed, while in others, such as Romania, it merely kept a low profile.

The origins and nature of liberalism continue to draw the attention of scholars from various disciplines and represent another source of heated controversies.² Scholars of liberalism particularly focus on the main representatives of liberal ideas, such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, Benjamin Constant, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart

² A still valid study on this issue is Guido de Ruggiero's *A History of European Liberalism*. Challenging questions in view of a comparative approach are also present in Lothar Gall, "Liberalismus und bürgerliche Gesellschaft: zu Charakter und Entwicklung der liberalen Bewegung in Deutschland," 324–56; Leontovitch, *Geschichte der Liberalismus in Russland*; Ýnsel, "Türkiye'de Liberalizm kavramýným soycizgisi," 41–74.

Mill, T.H. Green and L.T. Hobhouse. After the end of World War II, some well-known theoreticians of liberalism interpreted its principles following their own perspectives on political and social conditions as well as in light of the changing intellectual atmosphere. They shared the same diversity of opinions that had also been a characteristic of their predecessors. Perhaps John Rawls (1921–2002) represents the most clearly authoritarian voice among egalitarian liberals. His *Theory of Justice* (1971) is a modern liberal theory that used the idea of a hypothetical social contract in order to examine the problems of justice and equality.³ In another book, *Political Liberalism* (extended edition, 2005), Rawls held that competing and incompatible moral, religious and philosophical doctrines could only co-exist in a society based upon liberal democratic principles.⁴ Ronald Dworkin (b. 1931) is part of the same school. In his book *A Matter of Principle* (1985), Dworkin insisted on everyone's right to respect and equal recognition by law.⁵ At the other extreme, in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), the classical-liberal Robert Nozick (1938–2002) pleaded in favor of a libertarian, voluntary society in which individuals cooperated among themselves without encroaching one another's rights.⁶

As to the case of Romania in pre-World War I times, several books were published on the issue of liberal parties and political movements, among which we remember those by Alexandru D. Xenopol. It was only in the interwar period, though, that significant theoretical analyses of liberalism and its role in the evolution of Romanian society started to appear. Thus, Ștefan Zeletin, a significant representative of the time's liberalism, considered that the bourgeoisie had played a decisive role in the modernization of Romania⁷ and also investigated the new type of liberalism of that era.⁸ Mihail Manoilescu analyzed the role of the traditional liberal bourgeoisie in the creation of the modern Romanian state. Since he considered that the Romanian state could no longer stand up to the challenges of the contemporary world, the author asked for the bourgeoisie's adoption of a new style.⁹ While Zeletin and Manoilescu relied upon socio-economic factors which they considered to be decisive in the evolution of ideology,

³ Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, Cambridge.

⁴ Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 3–46.

⁵ Dworkin, *A Matter of Principle*, Cambridge.

⁶ Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*.

⁷ Zeletin, *Burghezia română*, 74–137.

⁸ Zeletin, *Neoliberalismul*.

⁹ Manoilescu, *Rostul și destinul burgheziei românești*, 350–98.

the well-known literary critic Eugen Lovinescu considered the liberals to be the supporters of liberal ideas.¹⁰

Even though some works dealt with liberalism of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, communism did not stimulate scientific debates around the liberal theory. In this context, the first systematic investigation of the evolution of Romanian liberalism appeared in 1985 and represented an encouraging attempt to identify its development, to explain its origins and effects, and to define the specific originality of Romania.¹¹

After the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, liberalism became an important topic of research. One of the most comprehensive books of this kind deals with the origins, essence, external influences and the role of doctrine in nineteenth-century governments as well as with interwar liberalism which supported Romania's integration to the Western European social and political order.¹² Other works examine the possibilities of political liberalism from the beginning of the nineteenth century until World War I,¹³ or they investigate the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by focusing upon challenging issues.¹⁴ Finally, monographs dedicated to Romanian liberal leaders such as Ion C. Brătianu¹⁵ and Ion I.C. Brătianu¹⁶ indicate a significant number of similarities and differences characterizing Romanian liberal theory and practice.

In order to trace the evolution of the concept of *liberalism* between 1821 and 1866, it may be useful to compare liberal ideas with the language that was being used in order to describe them in Tudor Vladimirescu's 1821 *Proclamations* or in the articles of the so-called *Cărvunari Constitution*, including essays published in 1867 by the poets and journalists Dimitrie Bolintineanu and Cezar Bolliac. In *Cererile norodului românesc* (*The Demands of the Romanian People*), Tudor Vladimirescu was interested in social reform and democracy, but he contented himself with citing cases of injustice and abuse without insisting upon the general

¹⁰ Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, particularly volumes I and III.

¹¹ Platon, "Liberalismul românesc în secolul XIX: emergență, etape, forme de expresie," 73–103, original title "Le libéralisme roumain au XIX siècle: émergence, étapes, formes d'expression," 63–86.

¹² Nica, *Liberalismul din România: teorie și practică*. The first volume is especially useful in what regards the period between 1821 and 1866.

¹³ Stan and Iosa, *Liberalismul politic în România*.

¹⁴ Brătescu and Buruiană, *Liberalismul românesc*.

¹⁵ Stan, *Ion C. Brătianu*.

¹⁶ Iordache, *Ion I.C. Brătianu*.

principles that characterized them. He did not use words such as *liberal*, *liberty*, or *liberalism*, and their absence suggested the limited character of the Romanian contemporary vocabulary because of tradition.¹⁷ The *Cărvunari Constitution*, which was drafted by Ionică Tăutu and some of his peers, represented a more refined document than Tudor Vladimirescu's *Demands*. In its writers' views, the *Constitution* had to become the basis of liberalism. Ionică Tăutu established a series of general principles and offered theoretical justification for the practices and procedures he recommended, but the language he used largely remained traditional. He frequently talked about liberty but used the Romanian term of *slobozenie* (*freeing someone*), and when he complained that property should not be abusively taken away from anyone, he used the phrase "without one's free will" ("fără slobodă voința sa").¹⁸ In contrast with Tăutu's ideas, the essays of Dimitrie Bolintineanu¹⁹ and Cezar Bolliac²⁰ represented genuine examples of liberal thought and they revealed how the concept changed its meanings throughout the several decades that saw the socio-intellectual modernization and formation of Romanian political thought. The deep and multiple facets of their analyses prove the fact that they were familiar with the European terminology in use at the time. That explains why *slobod* and *slobozenie* (*free, freedom*) gave way to the terms of *liber* and *libertate* (Romanian for *living in liberty, liberty*).

The transition from an old-fashioned vocabulary to a modern one raises several questions we need to address in order to understand social phenomena, namely: Why are old words and expressions replaced by new ones? What is the relation between language and social phenomena? Can we identify within languages the essential conceptual framework necessary for analyzing Romanian socio-political realities?

The Nation's Formation

For investigating the evolution of the concept of *liberalism* it is important to keep in mind the changes that occurred in Romanian politics and society between 1820 and 1866. The characteristic feature of the period was

¹⁷ Srețcu and Vataman, "Un manuscris necunoscut al ponturilor lui Tudor Vladimirescu," 599–604.

¹⁸ Barnovschi, *Originile democrației române*, 139.

¹⁹ Bolintineanu, "Liberalismul," 552–9.

²⁰ Bolliac, "Libertatea," 232–8 (initially published in *Trompeta Carpaților*, 6–18 July and 27 July–10 August 1867).

represented by the Romanians' desire to have control over their own destiny. Romanians asserted this intention in the programs of Tudor Vladimirescu and the 1848 revolutionaries, in their fight to unite the principalities as well as in the election of the first rulers of the United Principalities. As the Ottoman suzerainty was reduced to only a few elements, new problems of foreign politics arose. Despite the fact that Russia effected an administrative modernization by means of the Organic Regulations from 1830–1848, Romanians considered it an uncomfortable neighbor. Instead, countries like France that had created opportunities for economic development were the ones that provided models of fundamental laws and institutional norms in Romania. The West had become an ideological source in molding modern thought and had convinced the majority of the Romanians about the necessity of establishing closer contacts with it.

Who Were the Liberals?

The origins of Romanian liberals must be sought among the milieus of merchants, small manufacturers, and boyars living in a society in full process of change. The population's growth and the constant economic development resulted in significant mutations of the social structure of the Romanian society. The middle-class became an important power field and the borderlines between it and the boyars started to fade away. The generation of intellectuals that reached their maturity during the 1830s and 1840s and which represented the backbone of *liberalism* during that time was formed by the co-habitation and interpenetration of several social layers. From certain points of view, these intellectuals were the descendants of the so-called "reform boyars." At the same time, they represented the new trend of manufacturers and the struggle for representation in the public sphere. Most of them were sons of boyars who had studied in France and who believed that they and the two principalities were a part of Europe. They had profiled themselves in Bucharest and Iași as champions of the new socio-political ideas. They had been attracted by liberal ideas partly because they considered that these could be associated with the process of the Westernization of Romania. They were eager to lead a future-oriented movement just like the Western personalities they admired and whom they tried to imitate. The triumph of liberalism finally promised Romanians' liberation from foreign rule. Thus, liberal ideas were attractive to those intellectuals who defended individual freedom and a constitutionally-based government and who considered these principles as

being in contrast with the ideas and values represented by the neighboring conservative Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg empires.

The Evolution of Liberalism

The *liberalism* cultivated and disseminated by the Romanian elites between the 1820s and 1860s was an original combination of Western European, particularly French ideas, and autochthonous traditions of socio-political thought. On the one hand, Romanian intellectuals were passionate admirers of the 1789 *Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights*, the French declaration of liberal principles that had preceded the 1848 Revolution.²¹ The European sources used by Romanian liberals were exclusively those coming from France. Mihail Kogălniceanu was one of the young Moldavians who went to the West in the 1830s and was educated at Berlin University. There he became familiar with the German liberal movement, with Schiller and the fight for freedom and social justice, and with Herder's concept of national liberty.²² Interestingly, Mihail Kogălniceanu was drawn to French historical literature and especially the works of Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet, works that had been particularly influential on the 1848 Romanian revolutionaries.²³

The liberal discourse from the Romanian Principalities shared similar values with those expressed by the 1848 revolutionaries from Paris and other European cities. Simultaneously, however, the Romanian *liberalism* also bore the mark of its specific predominant social and political conditions, namely archaic mentalities, the country's under-developed state in comparison to Western Europe, and its long dependence on foreign powers. Thus, Romanian *liberalism* represented a continuous struggle between autochthonous conditions and the adoption of Western models. This process certainly involved a significant degree of Westernization, but it would be wrong to mainly attribute the progress of liberal ideas in Romania to the country's imitation of Western ways. In fact, as the events succeeded one another and the Romanians' own thinking matured, Romanian liberals distanced themselves from their models in many respects.

²¹ On the connections between French intellectuals and the Romanian youth, especially in the 1840s, see Popovici, "Santa Cetate"; Breazu, *Michelet și Români*; Boitoș, *Raporturile Românilor cu Ledru-Rollin*.

²² Zub, *Kogălniceanu istoric*, 168–74.

²³ *Ibid.*, 180–94.

The birth of *liberalism* in Romania was tied to changes in point of social conscience, i.e., it was linked to the apparition of a modern Romanian culture in the Romanian Principalities of the first decades of the nineteenth century. It was during this time that the Moldavian and Wallachian elites became aware of the principalities' backwardness in comparison to Western Europe. As a consequence, liberal ideas formed a doctrine that combined the political liberation of the entire community from foreign rule with the equally strong assertion of individual rights in the face of authoritarian regimes.

The evolution of these ideas can be deduced from the time's documents, especially from legal codes, constitutional projects, political proclamations, petitions to emperors, tsars and Sultans, pamphlets and newspaper articles, or private correspondence. Some scholars consider that the starting point of liberal thinking was represented by Dumitrache Sturdza's 1802 work, *Plan sau o formă de oblăduire republicească aristo-democraticească* (A project or form of aristocratic-democratic republican organization). Dumitrache Sturza therein asked for a fundamental law, some sort of constitution that would describe the role of governmental procedures in similar terms as the English one. He also endorsed the need to create two legislative chambers and to limit the amount of power that boyars could exercise.²⁴ Three other equally important works were Andronache Donici's *Adunare de legi* (Collection of Laws, 1814), *Legiuirea Calimachi* (Calimachi's Law, 1817) and *Legiuirea Caragea* (Caragea's Law, 1818), all of them pleading for political justice and for the need to correlate laws with "the natural order of things."²⁵

Additionally, boyars from Moldavia and Wallachia drew up memoirs addressed to the sultan, the tsar and the Austrian Chancellor Metternich. They protested against the abuses of "Greek" princes and asked for the restitution of ancient rights, i.e., the return to the "rule" of boyars.²⁶ They all pleaded in favor of national liberation. In the documents written at the time, the authors tried to adapt universal principles to the specific conditions of the Romanian principalities. For example, the *Cărvunari Constitution* contained the early expression of fundamental liberal principles regarding thought, freedom of press, religious freedom, equality in front of the law irrespective of the social category one belonged to,

²⁴ Vîrtosu, *Napoleon Bonaparte*, 32–9.

²⁵ Georgescu, *Istoria ideilor politice românești*, 175; *Istoria dreptului românesc*, 75–6, 81.

²⁶ *Documente privind istoria României*, 409–14.

the guarantee and use of private property, the freedom of commerce, and the superiority of the legislative over the executive branch.²⁷

Another document that Ioan Câmpineanu had elaborated in 1838, namely *Project of a Constitution for Wallachia*, represented a first constitutional project. Its first article established a general principle, according to which Wallachia would be a place of freedom for all its inhabitants; its second article solemnly stated that all Wallachians are equal in front of the law and they all have a right to hold a civil or military position and to pay taxes. He then proclaimed the guarantee of individual freedom²⁸ and noted that no one could be arrested or get a criminal record except for the specific cases provided by the law. Other dispositions limited the legislative competences of the sovereign in favor of the national representative organ or the general assembly, which had the authority to request new taxes and to approve the annual budget, to interpolate and hold ministers responsible for their actions. He pleaded for the promulgation of a fundamental law and asked the sovereign to publish a complete collection of civil, commercial, administrative and military laws within at most six months after the proclamation of the state's independence.²⁹ Like Ionică Tăutu, Ioan Câmpineanu elaborated the principles of an ideal form of government and considered that good ideas and institutions would transform society provided they were allowed to function freely and lead to the formation of a just state. Their subsequent difficult experiences during the 1848 revolution indicated the need of instituting reforms whose goal was to overcome social deficiencies.

In the 1840s, the written press became a forum for the elaboration and refinement of liberal ideas. The literary weekly *Propășirea* (*Prosperity*), published in Iași in 1844 and edited by Mihail Kogălniceanu, wonderfully fulfilled its mission. Kogălniceanu's liberal beliefs considered all possible variants, ranging from the request to establish mandatory elementary education and to recognize marriage by means of a civil contract and not just a religious one,³⁰ to appeals for the emancipation of the Roma.³¹

The 1848 revolutionary movement, which was more radical and creative in Wallachia and more moderate and short-lived in Moldavia, repre-

²⁷ The contents of the constitution are rendered in detail in Barnovschi, *Originile democrației române...*, 133–228.

²⁸ For a clarification of the term *slobozenie* (*freedom*) and its differences from the term *libertate* (*liberty*), see Klaus Bochmann's study, "The Concept of *Patriotism* in Romanian Culture," published in this volume.

²⁹ Vlăduț, *Ion Câmpineanu*, 130–39 and 225–29.

³⁰ *Propășirea*, 207.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 99–101.

sented a combination between reformist effervescence and the practical application of liberal ideas. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the principles proclaimed by the 1848 revolutionaries had been essentially established two decades earlier. They did not involve any rupture in point of continuity of thought, even though the 1848 revolutionaries imposed their own interpretations and explanations regarding state politics and administration.

The most significant official declarations containing revolutionaries' principles were: *The Petition-Proclamation in the Name of All Moldavian Territories*³²; *What Are Artisans?*³³; *In the Name of the Romanian People* (the so-called *Islaz Proclamation*), elaborated and promulgated by the revolutionaries from Wallachia³⁴, and *The Wishes of the National Party from Moldavia* written by Mihail Kogălniceanu.³⁵ Other sources of liberal thought were represented by the proclamations of the provisional government from Bucharest and the officials' reports, press articles and private correspondence.

In these documents the 1848 revolutionaries offered a coherent viewpoint about *liberalism* whose ideals they were determined to put into practice.³⁶ They considered "national freedom" to be essential for the triumph of liberal institutions. All the 1848 revolutionaries embraced the idea of a fundamental law or *Constitution* that should be the supreme guarantee of freedom and a basis for the entire administrative and legal edifice they were to construct.³⁷ Within this new structure they underscored the need for equality of rights among all citizens irrespective of their origins or wealth.³⁸ They also supported the principle of the sovereignty of the people; they enlivened the entire constitutional system, and justified their aspirations towards freedom. Either in constitutions or projects of constitution, they referred to the citizens' participation in the state's govern-

³² Bodea, *1848 la Români*, 359–62.

³³ *Ibid.*, 421–7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 533–41.

³⁵ *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române*, 89–137.

³⁶ *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române*, 483, initially published in *Pruncul Român*, 201; see the report of Ion Ghica, the official representative of the Wallachian government to Constantinople, June 1848.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 188–89: Dumitru Brătianu to Paul Bataillard, 30 June 1848, 411: The Proclamation of the Provisional Government of Wallachia, 11 July 1848.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 211–17: Ioan Pașu *alias* Popovici, *O scurtă cuvântare spre deslușirea tinerei Constituții a României în înțelesul popular țesută* [Brief speech for clarifying the young Constitution of Romania in its popular meaning], 430–2: The Constitution Explained by C. Brezoianu, 12 July 1848.

ment, especially in point of the election of lawmakers. They simultaneously insisted that governmental officials should regularly consult with the citizens in order to inform them about the legislative activities and projects and so as to find out their opinions and discontents.³⁹ In this way, the 1848 revolutionaries considered that they should also engage the average people in public affairs and offer them the experience they needed in view of self-government. In order to ensure the accurate information of all citizens and so as to channel their energy in the right directions, they primarily depended upon freedom of press and its power to explain and convince.⁴⁰ Some 1848 revolutionaries recognized the existence of restrictions to individual freedoms as far as property rights were concerned. In this sense, they could not support the request concerning the irremovability of property but they admitted that private property could be confiscated in view of the public good⁴¹; they therefore insisted that controversial aspects should be solved by negotiation and mutual understanding as well as by the compensation of the owners whose goods were taken away.⁴²

The 1848 *liberalism* was idealist and messianic from several points of view. It comprised a religious dimension just as politics did.⁴³ Obvious characteristics of the 1848 era such as “taming” the public rhetorics, restraining personal ambitions, and even the evolution of vocabulary were due to the revolutionaries’ sympathy towards peasants as well as to their intention to adapt the principles of equality and justice to the peasants’ needs and level of understanding.

³⁹ Ibid., 315–16: Decree no. 186 from the provisional government of Wallachia, 6 July 1848; 360–1: Letter of the Ministry of Public Instruction from Wallachia, 9 July 1848, 373: A.G. Golescu to Ștefan Golescu, 9 July 1848.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 616, 619: A.G. Golescu to Nicolae Bălcescu, 19 July 1848.

⁴¹ Ibid., 140–4: See Zotovici’s article on the issue of property (initially published in *Pruncul Român*, 26 and 29 June 1848).

⁴² Ibid., 412–13: Proclamation no. 227 of the Provisional Government of Wallachia, 11 July 1848; Ibid., 306: “Ceva despre articolul proprietății: soarta țăranului de la Regulament încoace” [Some considerations on the Constitutional Article regarding property: the Peasants’ fate since the regulation], initially published in *Poporul Suveran*, 11 September 1848.

⁴³ Ibid., 395–6: G. Vernescu, “Reforma Românilor justificată din caracterul lor moral” [The Romanian reform justified by their moral character] (initially published in *Pruncul Român*, 10 July 1848); Ibid., 435–6: Report of Commissioner Turnavitu to the Wallachian Ministry of Internal Affairs, 14 August 1848; Ibid., 266–7: Cesar Bolliac’s article in *Poporul Suveran*, 6 August 1848. See also Antohi, “Utopie et révolution: idées européennes, expériences roumaines,” 300–10.

The defeat of the 1848 revolution, the dissolution of the Wallachian provisional government, and the exile of many of the revolutionaries did not interrupt the evolution of liberal thought. There was actually continuity between liberal ideas, the principles upheld by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention from Focșani in the early part of 1859, and the ideas liberals affirmed during the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. We can get a clarification of concepts and language starting with *The Islaz Proclamation* and *The Wishes of the National Party* from Moldavia and ending with the reforms taken during the rule of Al. I. Cuza. In point of political organization, all the liberals accepted the idea of the separation of powers and the supremacy of the laws adopted by an independent legislature. All the liberals sustained citizens' right to participate in the political affairs of the country, to politically organize themselves, and to freely express their opinions and ideas. At the same time, many recognized the urgent need for social reforms.⁴⁴ All in all, the debate around these aspects revealed that a refinement of concepts and a linguistic clarification had occurred.

Liberal Typologies

The principles of nineteenth-century Romanian *liberalism* resembled the European liberal thought of the time which underscored the respect for citizens' political and civil rights; the freedom of expression and association; the strict limitation of the monarch's power; the establishment of an assembly invested with the power to legislate and set taxes and which would be elected and held responsible in front of the voters; a judicial system that was separate from the executive and legislative one; and a fundamental law or constitution that defined citizens' rights and responsibilities. The program of the Romanian liberals aimed at the country's obtaining independence and the union of the principalities. Nevertheless, defining the Romanian *liberalism* from this period is not an easy task. Firstly, Romanian liberals did not all think alike. We can actually identify two groups of liberals during this period—the radicals and the moderates. The two groups agreed upon the idea of liberation from foreign rule but they expressed different opinions, sometimes very passionately, about the nature and scope of domestic reforms, especially the peasants' emancipation and the redistribution of land. Most of the liberals agreed about the need for a strong legislature, but they had different opinions about the

⁴⁴ Stan and Iosa, *Liberalismul politic*, 76–80.

forms it should take. The leftist group of the radicals supported the idea of a unique Chamber, which they thought able to provide a better representation of the population. Moderate liberals who were also joined by the conservatives insistently asked for the creation of a second Senate Chamber as a guarantee against profound and quick changes. Such differences became visible at the 1859 Constitutional Convention in Focșani, when the liberals tried to elaborate a fundamental law for the United Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. Both radical and moderate liberals had by then made the distinction between liberalism and conservatism as far as their essential characteristic features were concerned.⁴⁵

An attentive examination of the ideas embraced by both liberal groups shows that they were surprised by the enormous variety and effervescence of ideas that had taken hold of all the aspects of Romanian intellectual life. One could say that those from Wallachia were the leaders of liberal thought and they were generally more radical in their thoughts and actions and more open to innovations than their colleagues from Moldavia. The main reason for this seemed to be the differences regarding class structures in the two regions. In Wallachia, most liberals were on the verge of becoming a real bourgeoisie even though during that period their number was still small and their wealth was only moderate. On the other hand, the manner of thought of an agrarian society and the attachment to a traditional lifestyle were still very strong among educated persons in Moldavia. Therefore, liberal movements from Wallachia between the 1820s and the 1840s tended to concur with Western European thought, while the similar movements from Moldavia were primarily cultural. These differences persisted between the 1850s and 1860s.

There is another aspect characterizing Romanian *liberalism* during this period which should be taken into consideration, namely economic *liberalism*. This took the form of doing propaganda in favor of free exchange, a concept that dominated Romanian economic beliefs between 1830 and 1880. Just as in the case of socio-political thought, the advocates of commerce thought that the ideas of the industrial Western and agricultural Eastern economies completed one another. The concept of *free exchange* also represented a response to economic and social conditions that was in large part accepted by the 1848 generation. Ion Ghica, for instance, embraced the principles of free exchange and promoted them in *Propășirea* (*Prosperity*). But he was not the only one. Two other economists of the time, Nicolae Șuțu and Alexandru Moruzi, firmly promoted free exchange

⁴⁵ Stanomir, *Nașterea Constituției*, 333–6.

as necessary for the progress of all areas of activity. During the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, free exchange became an official economic policy of the government.⁴⁶ Yet, the question remains as to how well prepared the liberals were to accept the extreme principles of economic liberalism and how clear-cut the difference was they made between this and their own socio-political liberalism. Moreover, the plan of the radicals to take lands from great property-owners and give them to the peasants did not correspond to the teachings of Ion Ghica, Nicolae Șuțu and Alexandru Moruzi.

The Language of Liberalism

As Sorin Antohi and Klaus Bochmann have noted, a flux of ideas and languages dominated the Romanian Principalities between the 1820s and the 1860s: these were represented by an old Romanian language that combined the Latin heritage with old Slavic, Hungarian, Ottoman, Turkish and modern Greek, as well as by a modern Romanian-in-the-making, both forms of the Romanian language being mixed with other types of linguistic borrowings, particularly from French.⁴⁷ During the above-mentioned period, Romanian liberals processed a high variety of words, expressions and syntactic combinations, and they tried to find adequate names for the ideas they constantly adopted and redefined. As already noted, they used French as the main source of new ideas and expressions, and France as a model of political and social thought. Yet why did they borrow so many words from French? It seems that this mainly happened because, for them, France meant “Europe,” namely the West: it represented the most advanced civilization of the times, and that is why they believed that the ideas expressed therein were in accordance with what they considered to be the dominant liberal spirit of the period. French was also a cognate language to Romanian, hence its words and sentences could be easier to adopt. This also consolidated the Romanian liberals’ conscience of national identity as one having Latin and Roman origins. Inherent dangers also existed and they were due to enthusiastic borrowings. The most significant danger was the creation of a new language, one inclined towards abstractions and which was substantially different from the traditional and pragmatic language spoken by the large mass of the population, one which by the end of the nineteenth century had become almost incomprehensible

⁴⁶ Demetrescu, *Influența școalei economice liberale*, 28, 57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 134, 140.

to them.⁴⁸ This erosion of the socio-linguistic identity was already evident by the time of the separation of liberals from the large mass of the population. This is why they sent their so-called “commissaries” to rural areas: their precise mission was to explain to the peasants what the *Islaz Proclamation* and other numerous declarations meant.

The vocabulary was not a commonly shared tool for all people with liberal aspirations. One reason could be represented by the fluidity of liberal ideas. Thus, as interest in new political and social problems grew and a very diverse socio-political literature emerged in relation to numerous topics, new groups were born that conferred different meanings to one and the same notion. This marked the transition from the archaic words of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century to the more modern vocabulary of the 1840s and after. The most well educated and known politicians as well as some merchants continued to use Greek and Turkish words, i.e., the older Romanian vocabularies. Yet, intellectuals, in general, and liberals, in particular, adopted words and expressions from Latin and abandoned the use of Greek and Turkish languages that symbolized a dead world. The most numerous borrowings of Romance words were taken from French. They were adopted either as digressions or paraphrases by making use of Romanian words that already existed in the vocabulary.⁴⁹ The main reason for this seems to have been given by the changed status of the intellectual leaders: they replaced their status of boyars with that of persons educated in agreement with the modernizing aspirations of the Western world. The latter category was made up of the boyars’ sons and it represented a rising middle class that had studied French language and culture in France.⁵⁰

“Liberal,” “Liberty,” “Liberalism”

The concept of *liberal* was only occasionally used by Romanians in the 1840s. It had a general meaning that made reference to those persons who were discontent with the existent political order and who wanted change to a certain degree.⁵¹ The earliest use I could find resides in a French lan-

⁴⁸ Antohi, “Cuvintele și lumea” (I), 553.

⁴⁹ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*, 184–5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵¹ *Anul 1848*, 327: Adresa de protestare a foștilor Locotenenți domnești I. Eliade și Chr. Tell către Sultanul [Protesting address of the former lord lieutenants I. Eliade and Chr. Tell to the Sultan], October 1848.

guage letter of the Moldavian ruler Mihail Sturdza to Minciaky, Russia's general consul in the principalities, from 8 August 1834. He therein used the concept of *liberal* with a negative meaning:

I have acquired the conviction that famous liberal ideas derive from nothing else than a guilty egotism which aims to satisfy its personal interests through revolts and anarchy. Obviously, the most redoubtable foes of order are represented by illusory and subversive maxims which abuse the inexperienced youth to the detriment of public happiness.⁵²

In his famous 1844 appeal regarding the emancipation of the Rroma people, Mihail Kogălniceanu used the term *liberal* to describe the generous conditions that had been approved by the General Assembly of Moldavia: "All these reforms are an honor to the government that proposed them and to the chambers that gave them a more liberal scope."⁵³ Yet, he used the more archaic term *slobozenie* (*freeing*) to refer to the idea of Rromas' emancipation. It was only during the 1848 revolution that the term *liberal* became more widespread in the Romanian regions. It had many meanings both for the liberals and for their adversaries.

Two of the commissaries that were sent in the territory by the provisional government of Wallachia in order to explain to the peasants their program of laws and to mobilize them towards offering their support to the new order faced serious difficulties in the attempt to fulfill their mission. One commissary informed the Ministry of Internal Affairs from Bucharest that he had to make serious efforts to counterattack the widespread "negative ideas" that were contrary to "liberal principles," all this in view of winning the villagers' support for the "noble cause" he represented. He did not act as a clerk but as a Romanian "who wanted the freedom and redemption of the motherland."⁵⁴ In his report to the Ministry of War regarding his activity of "public propaganda," another commissary reported the reticence of some villagers to the "redeeming effects" of the revolution and their concern for the future and he also spoke about the "damaging alliance" of the rich who acted against the "liberals," namely against the government. He himself preferred to die for "freedom" than to live as a slave.⁵⁵ Bucharest

⁵² De Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*, 71.

⁵³ Kogălniceanu, "Dezrobirea țiganilor," 99.

⁵⁴ *Anul 1848*, 435: "Raport al comisarului Turnavitu la Ministerul de Interne al Valahiei" [Report of the Commissary Turnavitu to the Ministry of Internal Affairs from Wallachia], 14 August 1848.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, 167–8: "Petițiunea lui Constantin Vișoreanu către Ministerul de Război al Țării-Românești" [The petition of Constantin Vișoreanu to the Ministry of War from Wallachia], September 1848.

also knew the same feeling of threat which was attributed to the enemies of “liberty and reform.” The radical Ion C. Brătianu, the head of the Bucharest police, urged everyone “who was a liberal” not to yield to fear or trust the rumors that their foes were spreading around.⁵⁶

During the 1848 Revolution, the term *liberals* referred to those that upheld all the political and economic changes. One of the most accurate characterization of *liberalism* appeared in the 23 August–3 September issue of the newspaper *Poporul Suveran*. The anonymous author of the article praised those who had distinguished themselves by their “liberal spirit” because they had dedicated their life to achieving equality and fraternity. They were not only ready to fight against all the privileges and “despotic powers” but also to join “the fanatic peasants” in defending the motherland.⁵⁷ Another journalist who contributed to *The Sovereign People* described the liberals as men who wanted to reform existent laws, to institute new “fair and liberal laws” and to defend “our holy freedoms.”⁵⁸ General Gheorghe Magheru, a member of the provisional government, did not hesitate to talk about “the liberal idea” and the defense of the constitution by the liberals.⁵⁹

In 1848, the term *liberal* was in particular applied to those who had favored the emancipation of peasants.⁶⁰ In this sense, polemics around the agrarian reform made some people equate liberal ideas with “communism.” Liberals ended up by being frequently accused of holding firm opinions in favor of defending peasants’ land rights, especially in the case of the radicals, and they were also often criticized for their persistence in accepting the limitation of their own rights despite the fact that they were great landowners.⁶¹ There were also some other liberals who claimed that there is no greater injustice than the confiscation of a person’s property and they demanded that the agrarian reform be accomplished by negotiation and by the mutual agreement between landowners and peasants,

⁵⁶ Ibid., vol. III, 603: “Proclamațiunea Șefului Poliției Capitalei I.C. Brătianu către cetățeni” [The Proclamation of the Head of the Capital’s Police, I.C. Brătianu, to the citizens], August 1848.

⁵⁷ Ibid., vol. III, 631: “Despre împroprietărirea țăranilor” [On the distribution of land to peasants], article from *Poporul Suveran*, 23 August–3 September 1848.

⁵⁸ Ibid., vol. III, 626: article from *Poporul Suveran*, 23 August 1848.

⁵⁹ Ibid., vol. IV, 595: the letter of General G. Magheru to Riza Pasha, September 1848.

⁶⁰ Ibid., vol. IV, 209–210: “Emanciparea clăcașilor” [The Emancipation of socmen], article by I. Ionescu from *Pruncul Român*, 4 September 1848.

⁶¹ Ibid., vol. V, 625: “Românii nu sînt comuniști” [Romanians are not Communists], study by I. Ionescu in *Foaia pentru Minte*, 13–20 December 1848.

which would include the compensation of the former. Otherwise, the reformers would be considered the promoters of communism.⁶²

I could find the earliest use of the term *liberty* in a brochure that described the activities of the Committee of the Society of Romanian Students in Paris from 1845 and 1847. One of the reasons for the students' failure of creativity and authentic action was considered to be the absence of "freedom of thought," which was a *sine qua non* condition of progress.⁶³ Nicolae Bălcescu, a significant member of the Committee, used the term *libertate* (*liberty* or *freedom*) offhandedly. In an article published in 1846 discussing the life of Romanian peasants, their poverty and hard work, he used the term *liberty* to refer to a situation that was contrary to that of a despotic regime.⁶⁴ In a somehow different context, he referred to *liberty* in an 1850 essay in which he discussed the capacity of Romanians to use revolutionary means in order to reach their goals. He used the term in order to describe the rulers' goal to maintain the country's independence against the enemies outside the borders and to refer to the defense of individual and collective rights inside the country.⁶⁵ In his work *Românii supt Mihai Voevod Viteazul* (Romanians under Michael the Brave), Nicolae Bălcescu used the term *liberty* with its meaning of national independence. The first chapter of the book was entitled "National Liberty" and referred to liberty from a spiritual point of view, as a gift bestowed by God upon deserving peoples, upon those peoples that fought for liberty and, hence, for God.⁶⁶ The Romanian exiles from Paris at the beginning of the 1850s, especially Bălcescu and Dimitrie Brătianu, used the term *liberty* as a synonym for self-determination, particularly when they militated for the liberation of the Eastern European peoples from the domination of authoritarian empires: "We want liberty, equality, justice for all; we want that every population and individual choose their place in complete free-

⁶² Ibid., vol. IV, 306: "Ceva despre articolul proprietății: soarta țăranului de la Regulament încoace" [Some considerations on the constitutional article regarding property: The peasants' fate since the regulation], article from *Poporul Suveran*, 11 September 1848.

⁶³ Ibid., vol. I, 75: *Dare de seamă de lucrările Comitetului Societății Studenților Români din Paris pe anii 1845–1846 și 1847* [Report on the activities of the Committee of the Society of Romanian students of Paris from 1845–1846 and 1847], 1848.

⁶⁴ "Despre starea soțială a muncitorilor plugare în principatele române în deosebite timpuri" [On the social state of ploughing workmen in the Romanian principalities at various times], in Bălcescu, *Opere* [Works], vol. I, 153, 155, 157.

⁶⁵ "Mersul revoluției în istoria Românilor" [Course of the Revolution in Romanian history], Bălcescu, *Opere*, vol. II, 107.

⁶⁶ *Românii supt Mihai Voevod Viteazul* [Romanians under Michael the Brave], *ibid.*, vol. III, 19.

dom” so that “the liberty of Danube peoples will be an established fact of our era.”⁶⁷

Cezar Bolliac used the term *liberty* with several meanings: despite the degree of liberty Romanians enjoyed during the revolution, he conferred upon the term the meaning of *national independence*.⁶⁸ He understood liberty as having a wider meaning when he asserted: “Liberty knows one law only: you give to everyone whatever you desire that they give to you [...]. You will learn what liberty is once you enter a developed society within its wide framework including the freedom of assemblies, debates and publicity”; also, “In what concerns liberty, the government belongs to society and does whatever the society wants it to do.”⁶⁹ Bolliac also expressed his doubts about the fact that monarchs obtained all the proclaimed freedoms, including those of election, expression and gathering. Liberty could not flourish in a society that did not try to develop its scope and make sacrifices for that.⁷⁰

Economists used the term *liberate* (*liberty* or *freedom*) with increased frequency and trust, especially in the post-1848 period. A good example in this sense is Alexandru Moruzi’s brochure published in 1861, and entitled *Progres și libertate* (Progress and freedom). He therein praised “the freedom of commerce” as a law which was generally valid for all humankind, and held that the free exchange of goods should know no limits because the progress of the civilized society was always directly proportional with this as well as other freedoms.⁷¹ At the same time, he paid attention to the more general and topical concept of *libertate* (*liberty* or *freedom*) and he thus spoke openly against the privileges of boyars who were making peasants’ life miserable.⁷²

As far as the concept of *liberalism* is concerned, I could find it in several texts. The earliest mention appeared in an 1829 letter by Ionică Tăutu to his uncle. He underscored the idea that countries could not have and

⁶⁷ Marcu, *Conspiratori și conspirații*, 57: “Comitetul național român către membrii Comitetului central democratic European” [Address by the Romanian National Committee to the members of the European Central Democratic Committee], 11 September 1851.

⁶⁸ Bolliac, “Apărarea revoluției,” 123 (initially published in *Poporul Suveran*, 30 August 1848: “We will have a bitter destiny in case we continue to be enslaved by the Organic Regulations, now that we have tasted the joys of liberty”).

⁶⁹ Bolliac, “Libertatea presei,” in *Scrieri*, vol. II.

⁷⁰ Bolliac, “Libertatea,” 232–8.

⁷¹ Demetrescu, *Influența școalei economice*, 59.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 62.

benefit from the same institutions. He considered that every Moldavian should know the difference between a constitution and a regulation and between *slobozenie* (*freedom*) and *liberalism* (*liberalism*).⁷³ A second early use of the concept of *liberalism*, one which this time had a negative connotation, appeared in a letter written by Mihai Sturdza to the Russian Consul Titow on 2 February 1840; the letter referred to some threatening ideas that circulated in the neighborhood of Wallachia:

Undoubtedly, it is not becoming that I should be the one to accuse those discourses that favor liberalism and which have appeared of late in Wallachia, yet I cannot restrain myself from drawing attention to the threat they represent when they seem to come from the Government, when they are tolerated by it, when they can have a disastrous result upon the minds of the Moldavian people [...] or when they can lead to anarchic ideas.⁷⁴

All in all, during and after the 1848 events, the concept of *liberalism* acquired meanings that were getting closer and closer to those expressed in modern socio-political languages.

Conclusions

If we were to attempt and find the period and circumstances in which the Romanian liberals managed to separate themselves from the language of the old regime and from the old regime properly speaking, I would suggest that this happened in 1859 at the Constitutional Conference in Focșani. I believe that it was then that the modernization of institutions interweaved with the modernization of the socio-political vocabulary.⁷⁵ The principles that were later proclaimed in the 1866 Constitution as well as the language in which they were expressed completely sanctioned this evolution.

Another equally eloquent, personal confirmation was represented by an essay written by Dimitrie Bolintineanu. In his view, the concept of *liberalism* (*liberalism*) was no longer a neologism but it competed with *slobozenie* (*freedom*) and other periphrases. He used it at ease, as this was a concept which was familiar to all educated Romanians. Bolintineanu claimed

⁷³ Tăutu, *Scrieri social-politice*, 263.

⁷⁴ De Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, Supplement I, vol. VI, 190.

⁷⁵ For the text of the Constitution and the minutes of the first session from 15 June 1859, see Gorovei, *Primul proiect de Constituție*.

that the core of *liberalism* was represented by the idea of individual freedom, one which proclaimed “individual sovereignly, the empire of man over himself and his wealth.”⁷⁶ He claimed that in the absence of individual freedom, political freedoms are nothing else than forms without substance. As a consequence, *liberalism* opposed itself to all the laws that were against free work and property. It symbolized freedom of conscience, association, press and, not least of all, the right to public education, because the capacity to read and write represents an essential condition for living in a democratic society or state. *Liberalism* presupposed respect for private property as a necessary basis for freedom. *Liberalism* also meant equal justice for all and therefore needed the existence of a completely independent legal system. Finally, *liberalism* considered that sovereignty resides in the people and it therefore demands governments to serve the people’s interest. Thus, just like the persons that were delegated to participate at the Constitutional Conference from 1859, in his above-mentioned liberal manifesto, Bolintineanu brought to good account the work of several previous generations. He did so by the establishment of an entire set of ideas and practices and by the creation of a language that was explicit enough.

Romanian *liberalism* was certainly idealist: this was perhaps not surprising given the atmosphere of late romanticism that dominated the country. Yet, it was open to receive the currents of European thought and circulated beyond political constraints. The Romanian liberals passionately shared the ideas of progress and engagement coming from France and the West of Europe as far as reformation was concerned, but they were not merely imitators of Western models. Being aware of the under-developed state of their country, they tried to find practical remedies to its political and social diseases, and they therefore put forth their eagerness to learn from others. This combination between autochthonous realities and Western experience contributed to the specific character of Romanian *liberalism*.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Bolintineanu, “Liberalismul,” 554.

⁷⁷ For the theoretical systematization of questions regarding the process of Romania’s modernization, see in particular the study of Alexandre Escudier in this volume, “Some Reflections on Historical Semantics, Political Modernity and Romanian History (1780–1939).”

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Democracy, Democratic, Democratization

Wim van Meurs

Examining the processes of democratization is important for assessing and understanding the pluralist meanings of socio-political languages. Present-day Western scholars have been drawn mainly to investigating the beginnings of democracy, which occurred over a century ago, and conceptualizing it.¹ In former communist countries, the relation between the present-day concept of *democracy* and its historical evolution is strongly politicized. Pre-communist democracies in these regions have been particularly idealized and deemed an important component in the consolidation of a new democratic regime.

Most national historiographies started from the premise that interwar regimes had to be qualified as “democratic.” This never-questioned normative assessment was based on a dichotomy: the distinction between democratic parties and antidemocratic extreme-left or extreme-right opponents, as well as the distinction between an autochthonous democratic stage that was visible at the end of the nineteenth century and in the 1920s and 1930s and the decline of democracy at the end of the 1930s. Generally speaking, democracy was perceived as representing the implementation of the potential of loyalty and honesty existing in national traditions and political culture. In contrast, the autochthonous socio-political roots characterizing enemies of democracy inside the country were contested. They were usually considered as accomplices to external powers and foreign ideologies.

Historical revisionism eliminated the distinction between democrats and their opponents and questioned the image of total democracy. The traditional distinction between a “great crisis” of democracy (i.e., a rup-

¹ Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government*; Rosanvallon, *La légitimité démocratique*.

ture between democratic and non-democratic forces) and a “small crisis” of democracy (i.e. only present within a democracy) became an improper instrument of analysis. The general idea of the specialized literature regarding post-World War I democracy and the introduction of general and secret voting rights is more somber today than it used to be ten years ago.² The conceptions and practices that were not in consonance with the classic liberal ideal of representative democracy did not limit themselves to political movements and marginal parties; they were long debated in political milieus and by opinion makers. The ideas of those who aspired to the consolidation of democracy and who reacted to the fascist and communist propaganda seemed to be rather “non-democratic” following the (non-historical) standards of liberal democracy. The dispute between democracy and its opponents was re-analyzed in studies focusing upon the controversial concept of *democracy* and the transfer of ideas and political institutions beyond ideological and state borders.

The viability of Central and Eastern European democratic institutions during the interwar and postwar years played a decisive role in limiting authoritarian inclinations after the anti-communist and anti-totalitarian revolutions of 1989–1991. In these countries’ reinterpreted histories, the national roots of the above-mentioned institutions and democratic traditions became axioms. Not only Romania achieved “the European norms” of liberal democracy, but also other countries in the region which gained their independence in 1918. In the interwar years, the concept of *democracy* was perceived as a supra-historical, universal norm immanent to every nation. These accounts hardly ever compared their own evolutions or democratic institutions with those of other countries in the region; nor did they imitate Western models or the latter’s institutional decisions taken in the process of democratization. The controversial character of democracy was often ignored. The normative approach they used implied a clear-cut separation between democrats and their opponents. One has come to learn, though, that institutional preferences and differences are largely irrelevant in democratic milieus, their assessment being only directed towards the defense of democracy. Existent paradigms and models as well as preferential decisions represent a constitutive factor of a given state.³

The concept of *democracy* includes two temporal dimensions: on the one hand, its usage by political persons and scholars in relation to recent events; and on the other, the interpretation of historical events (especially

² See especially Mazower, *Dark Continent*.

³ Kaelble, “Die interdisziplinären Debatten über Vergleich und Transfer,” 469–93.

from the nineteenth century) through its lens. Existent literature on the type of democracy characterizing interwar Romania shows that the normative and polemic emphasis of the concept and implicitly the frequency of its use were relatively reduced. The penchant for a “disciplined democracy” and a paternalist democracy respectively was widely spread among Bucharest’s political persons. Starting from Reinhart Koselleck’s basic concepts,⁴ one can hypothetically sketch four paradigms for applying and interpreting the concept of *democracy* in the interwar Romanian context. Without negating their controversial content and the political meaning of the concept, we believe that the four paradigms existed concomitantly and not in active competition with one another. In certain cases, their use implied excluding or negating an alternative meaning of the concept.

- 1) As a notion, *democracy* defines the principles and institutions of “a form of government in which supreme power rests in the hands of the people,”⁵ while common antonyms during the interwar years referred to dictatorship, absolutism or foreign domination. Putting emphasis and favoring individual principles (such as *legally constituted state*, *political freedoms*) or institutions (*constitution*, *parliamentary representation*, *separation of state powers*) can vary from one case to another. In this sense, introducing universal suffrage in Romania after World War I and the 1923 Constitution represent benchmarks on a par with the establishment of royal dictatorship in 1937 and the take-over of political power by Marshal Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard in 1940. What matters, at bottom, is to minimally understand the meanings of the concept of *democracy*.
- 2) The second problematization was even more controversial: it referred to the kind of normative requirements *democracy* must claim in point of parliamentary representation. The debate was to be focused upon defining *people* (more precisely the electorate) in relation to the voting procedure (qualification-based voting rights including three or four electoral colleges, or universal and equal suffrage), but it also concentrated on the decisional power of the parliament in opposition to the government and/or monarch.
- 3) A third problematization appeared in this context: that of estimating which parties could claim the *democratic* epithet in reference to these is-

⁴ “Demokratie,” in Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 821–91.

⁵ Cited in Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 854.

sues by taking into consideration their stand.⁶ In such a situation, the concept possessed a clear function of exclusion especially in point of the transition from the qualification-based voting rights of 1866 to the implementation of universal, direct and equal suffrage in 1917–1923/1926. On the other hand, *democracy* could be perceived through the often used argument of political immaturity and through the voters' tendency towards demagoguery,⁷ both issues implying a risk to state order. Universal suffrage became a reality after World War I, so that, strictly speaking, there were no longer any adversaries to democracy. We can hypothetically construct a matrix based upon the following questions: Is *democracy* desirable when understood as universal suffrage? Is it possible to be accomplished in the Romanian context? At bottom, this represents a debate between authors who consider universal suffrage and democratic control as supra-ordered principles and those who conceive of democracy as an inherent risk and, at best, a means to reach one's goals.

While the aristocratic view on politics and its representation disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century, the inevitable and irreversible introduction of universal suffrage after World War I generated a paternalist and disciplined approach. The sovereignty of the people and the political immaturity of those represented bound democracy to the power of a paternalist monarch or an authoritarian government. The preference towards a democratic party or a democratic ideology included the principle according to which the political immaturity of the voters or threatening them with the use of violence could not be used as a pretext to limit pluralism.

- 4) The fourth problematization referred to a "more direct" view and assessment of democracy, as the expression of the direct and spontaneous will of larger groups within the population as, for example, in the expression of certain mass manifestations or assemblies. This approach included the presumption of supra-ordering the people's will in opposition with the immaturity of (rural) voting classes and the necessity to paternally organize politics. People's will was here considered as opposed to the political camp.⁸ By introducing universal suffrage after

⁶ The concept of *social democracy* which Koselleck discussed separately was largely impossible to contest in this context and during this period, and it represented an established term. Cf. Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 886–89.

⁷ Maner, *Parlamentarismus in Rumänien*, 39–74.

⁸ Canovan, "Taking Politics to the People," 25–44; Manin, *Principes du gouvernement représentatif*.

World War I, the principled resistance to political equality was transformed into strategies of “disciplined” democracy which were supposed to limit demagoguery and the risks of having to heed people’s uncontrolled will. The perception of political actions as *democracy* by the voting classes of the majority was an important clue for the transformation of the concept. At bottom, this referred to the dispute between a restricted, rather formalist perception and a broader, rather populist approach.⁹

Starting from these four interpretations of the concept, we can identify several of its references in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. For instance, institutional references were represented by constitutions and Romania’s voting legislation: The Organic Regulation (1831), Cuza’s Statute (1864), and the constitutions of 1866 and 1923 and their corresponding vote laws. Using the assessment of political representation as point of departure, we can establish the conditions of *democracy*: assemblies of the Russian protectorate, *ad hoc* divans and the Assemblies of Moldavia and Wallachia prior to and after the 1859/1861 union.

Three notable historians, N. Iorga, P.P. Panaitescu and Ion Nistor, wrote many studies¹⁰ on Romanian politics during the first half of the twentieth century. N. Iorga and P.P. Panaitescu focused on the evolutions characterizing Romania’s Old Kingdom, while Ion Nistor concentrated on the evolution of Bessarabia under Russian rule. Memoirs and other political writings from the 1920s and 1930s investigated the limitations of democracy after the introduction of universal suffrage. One exception was the socialist Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, who dealt with the introduction of democracy as a political goal and others’ views of it.¹¹ Conservatives Alexandru Marghiloman and Constantin Argetoianu understood the concept of *democracy* as representing the constellation between the monarch and the two large parties of Romania, the National Liberal Party and the Peasant National Party, or the relation to voters. For Peasant Party member Grigore Gafencu and liberal Gheorghe Brătianu, it was important to undermine this political system and introduce authoritarian solutions.

⁹ Van Meurs, “Subversive Movements in the Political Arena” 75–110.

¹⁰ The name of “political person,” respectively “historian,” finally refers to one’s selected oeuvre and not to the person of the author: in this sense, N. Iorga was both a historian and a political person and Brătianu was both a politician and a historian.

¹¹ Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoioabăgia*; Stere, Bădescu, and Ungheanu, *Social-democratism sau poporanism?*.

The Democracy of Rights, Freedoms and Institutions

After the Great Union of 1 December 1918, there is evidence proving the predominance of national discourse in Romania. Not only social problems but also the institutionalization of parliamentary representation and the legally constituted state were considered separately from the process of the union. In the representations given to it by the three historians N. Iorga, P.P. Panaitescu and Ion Nistor, the concept of *democracy* was seldom visible, while adjacent concepts like “the political freedom of peoples” were almost exclusively understood as national liberation and the gaining of state sovereignty.¹² In the nineteenth century the concept of *democracy* therefore referred to the institutionalization of political rights.

P.P. Panaitescu’s textbook distinguished itself through its conservative nationalism. The author’s narration made obvious the condition to subordinate the concept of *democracy* to those of *union* and *nation*. He identified “the political freedom of peoples, i.e., the replacement of absolutism by constitutional monarchies or republics which were governed by people’s representatives and, in one word, represented democracy” with the major transformations occurring after the French Revolution. Yet he added: “Peoples not only needed political freedom, but national freedom,” because the latter was absent; as a consequence, “the ideas of freedom of the French Revolution especially pointed towards national revolutions.”¹³ Panaitescu tied democracy with political institutions: with the Organic Regulation, seen as a first constitution, and with the first Parliamentary Assemblies under the Russian protectorate. The author did not highlight the trait according to which only the clergy as well as large and small boyars took part in these assemblies; nor did he take into consideration “the democratic ideas” of the 1848 revolutionaries who were opposed to the Organic Regulation. In this context, *democratic* was synonymous with “the participation of the entire people to the government [...],” “the equality of all citizens as far as political rights are concerned.”¹⁴ A constitution was democratic if it stipulated that “the country belongs to the entire people who have the right to take part in its government.”¹⁵ Political freedoms

¹² Even in Iorga’s late political views, “democratic” meant “in consonance with the nation seen as a collective term.” In what regards the emergence of national churches, he noted: “[le] caractère démocratique de cette Eglise, vraie citadelle nationale.” Iorga, *Histoire des Roumains et de leur civilisation*, 256.

¹³ Panaitescu, *Istoria Românilor*, 247.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 277–78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 302–303.

such as freedom of press were almost completely absent. Panaitescu's description is historically adequate because it draws the image of an aristocratic view of democracy in the nineteenth century.

In *Istoria Basarabiei* (History of Bessarabia) (1923), in which he saw Bessarabia as a peripheral region of Russia, Ion Nistor appraised the legal institutions of the region; in this sense, the meaning he ascribed to the concept of *democracy* was similar to that of P.P. Panaitescu. According to Nistor, constitutionalism imposed itself in Russia later and with more difficulty than in other European states. After annexing Bessarabia in 1812, one could not speak of democracy in point of the representation of administrative and governmental institutions, and this was due to the Russification and denationalization of the autochthonous population. Local specificity and aspirations towards autonomy were considered more important than a (limited) political representation that was introduced as part of the qualification-based elections¹⁶ (Zemtsvo, 1870).

According to Nistor, Russia was an exception in Europe because it did not follow the tendency towards constitutionalism and it guaranteed political rights. At the same time, the assertion according to which Tsar Alexander the Third annulled the political reforms of his predecessor during the time of "the nihilists' terror" could be also understood as a justification on his side. However, Nistor noticed a causal relation between parliamentary beginnings, the elections for the Duma (the Russian Parliamentary chamber) in 1905, and the constitution on the one hand, and the emergence of national movements in the Russian Empire on the other. For Panaitescu, *democracy* at best represented a secondary issue, a means to achieve the national goal.¹⁷

In *Istoria poporului român* (History of Romanian people) (1905), N. Iorga held that *democracy* did not represent an ideal. The historian did not use expressions like *freedom* and *political rights*; nor did he employ the qualifier *democratic*. As an advocate of the movement of Sămănătorism (The Idyllist movement), Iorga pointed to the rural population's ignorance and lack of political education and experience, as well as to the quarrelsome and egotistic character of the political elite under the Russian protectorate and the first parliament, considering them "loud and dominated by innuendos."¹⁸

Political persons' writings proved that *democracy* was neither a controversial concept nor a common one. As a liberal political leader, Gheor-

¹⁶ Nistor and Neagoe, *Istoria Basarabiei*, 178–266.

¹⁷ Ibid., 266–74.

¹⁸ Iorga, *Geschichte*, vol. II, 253.

ghe Brătianu dealt with the issue of “liberalism and democracy” in one of his articles.¹⁹ He pleaded in favor of economic liberalism and free commerce as well as an authoritarian state run by a monarch. He was profoundly saddened by the corruption of economic liberalism with state-interventionist ideas and practices; in his view, this was clearly a regress: “Many are those who certainly think the same about the threat of excessive state immersion in the modern world.”²⁰ He defended himself against the assertion which stated that only two alternatives were likely to keep standing in the aftermath of the global economic crisis: “state capitalism or democratic socialism.”²¹ He seemed to try to make a synthesis between economic liberalism and *democracy*:

If one uses the definition of Manoilescu, it is clear that liberalism continues to represent the cult of individuality given its original and originary characteristic. [...] It is the foundation of democracy; yet, democracy can develop without it since it also represents the necessary breakdown of democracy. This happens because in trying to bring supremacy to the many and to as many as possible, democracy often risks to slip down on the dangerous slopes of demagoguery and it oftentimes becomes a tyranny of the masses, a stifling of the natural process of human selection which remains the essential and permanent characteristic of the liberal idea.²²

Like other thinkers, Brătianu used the economic order as an indispensable premise of political order. In his diary, the Romanian diplomat Grigore Gafencu not only dealt with Romania’s international stand but also with questions of Romania’s domestic politics and basic principles of the rapport between the monarch and the political parties. He considered that social groups and adhesions had no value because the life of domestic political circles was isolated, the lexical field of *democracy* representing a rarity. The antonym of notions such as *dictatorship*, *personal regime*, and *absolutism* was often transposed under the term of *constitutional regime*.²³ In reading his notes one can notice that he believed the king to have the capacity to configure politics in a constitutional framework. He was confident that King Charles II would keep on going “on the just path of laws and constitutional customs”; this would not happen because of the parties’ opposition but given “all the guarantees that a young king offers during

¹⁹ Brătianu, *Liberalism și democrație*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 9–10.

²³ Gafencu and Neagoe, *Însemnări politice 1929–1939*, 19.

hard times...”²⁴ His confession from 1930 is particularly significant: “Nobody can imagine a Romania lacking the support of the monarchic regime!”²⁵ Grigore Gafencu did not refer to the constitution or to democracy properly speaking. In his case, similar to that of other political leaders or intellectuals of the times, stability and the *raison-d’être* held priority over noble democratic principles.

No Democracy without Secret and Universal Suffrage

The historians N. Iorga, P.P. Panaitescu and Ion Nistor very seldom used the concept of *democracy* for the history of the nineteenth century. Their reserve was justified by the historical reality of the Romanian Principalities: it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that one could speak of universal suffrage as a political agenda. In this sense, projecting this claim upon previous times would represent an anachronistic subterfuge of history. Yet, it is well known that projection in the past did happen in processes of national state sovereignty, and this was expressed in historical works.

The above-mentioned historians analyzed the 1831, 1864 and 1866 constitutions as well as their representative institutions from a normative and teleological point of view. They underestimated the opposition between the adjective *democratic* seen as a limited representation of nobility and the clergy on the one hand, and the unequal and indirect participation of colleges to voting rights and the democratic ideals on the other. P.P. Panaitescu saw Charles I’s constitution as a *democratic* one, so he subsequently explored the system of the four electoral colleges and indirect suffrage for uneducated peasants.²⁶

In N. Iorga’s presentation of the prewar situation, the extension of political representation appeared as being undesirable. He considered that improving people’s living standard and the peasant’s level of education represented the great duty of political life. While he harshly criticized egotistical politicians, he extended his sympathy to the moderate liberal Prince Al. I. Cuza and to Charles I. He also openly expressed his disdain for the naïveté of political reformers and unconditional supporters of the constitution. He referred to the boyars who in 1829 “blurredly regarded

²⁴ Ibid., 50.

²⁵ Not least because “our people has always been dynastic.” Ibid., 50, 72.

²⁶ Panaitescu, *Istoria românilor*, 301–17.

utopian constitutions made after an Austrian or French model out of a politically romantic impulse.” On the other hand, he also made reference to the peasants whom nobody wanted to “encourage to participate in the cultural life.”²⁷

The concept of *democracy* appeared once only in Iorga’s hundreds of pages presenting the Phanariot period, and it referred to the “democratic revolutionary party” of Lajos Kossuth from Hungary.²⁸ Iorga showed a penchant for a paternalist state order.²⁹ Considering the political immaturity of peasants, he held that equal political rights were not desirable.³⁰ He interpreted the fact that “reform champions” wanted to “introduce universal suffrage” as a sign that they were “less moderate” than other reformers.³¹ In his assessment of the Junimea members as being “capable, noble and loyal to the dynasty,” their poor support was deemed as just a small, insignificant negative aspect.³² Politics had to be left to erudite circles, and not least of all to the prince. In their view, essential measures had to be taken in view of the country’s and people’s well-being and not in order to ensure their representativity of democratic legitimacy among the population.

It is worth mentioning that historians persevered in associating their ideal with that of the younger revolutionaries from 1848. Yet, they did not mention the efforts of liberal, socialist and peasant party members towards the implementation of universal suffrage in the second half of the nineteenth century, and they did not consider these endeavors as features representing the next level of democratization.³³ Given the conservative orientation of the three historians, it is not surprising that their writings foreground the process of national awareness and union to the detriment of the peasants’ question and democratization. Such exemplary descriptions never give the impression that *democracy* (understood as comprising uniform and universal suffrage) would represent an end in itself. When uniform and universal human rights were introduced in all Romania’s regions after World War I, they were not associated with a crescendo of democratization.³⁴ The idea of a *disciplined democracy* seen as a necessary impulse to the national ideal

²⁷ Iorga, *Geschichte*, vol. II, 254, 348.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 254.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 468.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 472.

³² Iorga, *Geschichte*, 379.

³³ Panaitescu, *Istoria românilor*, 301–17.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 324.

better suited the thought of these historians. Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea was as pessimistic as the others when he made reference to the present and not to historical events and explicitly perceived universal and equal suffrage as a political priority. In his view, not only conservatives but also some of the “democrats” would be against it:

Henceforth we will understand why our dominating classes and the political oligarchy have not willfully used, don't and won't willfully use universal suffrage. In this respect, a series of articles published in *Ordinea* (*Order*), a magazine that is both conservative and democratic, are particularly relevant: they champion universal suffrage but [...] for others. What *Ordinea* essentially says is that universal suffrage is beneficial for other European states which are either culturally superior to us, such as France or Germany, or culturally inferior, like Bulgaria or Serbia; yet, in the case of our state's organization we have something, some form of a secret, which makes us the only country where the universal vote cannot be introduced. *Ordinea* tries to go about and around the issue, just like a bear, in order to explain this secret to itself and others but fails to do so. I think the time has come for *Ordinea* to finally clarify what the secret is about. True, the conservative-democratic magazine is right, we are a unique and exceptional country in which universal votes cannot become a reality because we are the only European country (unlike Russia and Turkey who are mainly Asian) based upon mythicized serfdom, but still serfdom. Or, it is absurd on one hand to conserve this serfdom, making it the very basis of state order—as *Ordinea* does in keeping with its conservative title, even if it does not dare spell it out—and on the other hand to give the serf universal, equal and direct suffrage. In this case, either the universal vote will eliminate serfdom—or, more precisely, neo-slavery—or the latter, which is stronger, will transform the universal vote into a lie.³⁵

According to Dobrogeanu-Gherea, universal voting rights could only be exercised if the qualification-based vote and neo-slavery were abrogated. Bourgeois democrats should target the abolition of *neo-slavery* and intervene in view of implementing universal suffrage. Without these changes, the concept of *democratic* lacked any meaning:

Following its principle, our army is a preeminently democratic institution, not social democratic [...] but bourgeois democratic. The first democratic principle is that of the mandatory military service for everyone.³⁶

On the other hand, Dobrogeanu-Gherea noticed the political immaturity of potentially new voters: “In the near future, social-democracy and advanced democracy will have to fight to make progressive ideas and

³⁵ Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoiobăgia*, 59.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

movements more accessible to the inert and recalcitrant peasantry.”³⁷ This was a question of time (and of the social-democratic party’s activity). Endowed with the political rights characteristic of a democracy, peasants were to become conscious of their true interests. According to the Romanian political thinker, *democracy* eventually came to represent a holy, though insufficient principle.

Constantin Argetoianu’s memoirs dealt with World War I period, when the Romanian political elite had to leave Bucharest and temporarily settle in Iași and Odessa. In these new locations they planned the postwar political order and focused on the reform of the constitution and the issue of suffrage respectively. Argetoianu held a leading position in various political parties (the Conservative Party, the National Liberal Party, the Democratic National Party—N. Iorga, the People’s Party—Averescu), and shared Averescu’s populist-aristocratic views on democracy. Argetoianu and his fellows foresaw changes of the state border and “possible constitutional troubles in the defeated countries,” but they did not foresee any major economic or social changes.³⁸ Dobrogeanu-Gherea was extremely critical about political regimes and parties (especially about the liberals and, to a lesser degree, the conservatives):

We found the origins of our governmental weakness and incapacity in *the lies of public life, and in the hypocrisy of our political regime*. We indeed lived for decades on end under a false constitutional regime that lasted until the beginning of war. We imported the most democratic Constitution possible from Belgium, one which ritually specified that “all state powers emanate from the nation” but in reality the nation was excluded not only from manifesting its powers, but also from exercising any control over public affairs. Ion Brătianu’s overwhelming and tyrannical influence after the War of Independence, the egotism of King Charles I who “during his long reign” primarily focused on fostering a peaceful atmosphere for the Crown, these attitudes founded a “sui generis” dictatorship, the alternative dictatorship of party leaders. The king successively called to power the leader of each of the two major parties, the liberals and the conservatives; the leader chose eight collaborators and the nine of them jointly chose the number of senators and deputies. The parliament henceforth became a simple chamber recording the government’s laws, while one could not at all speak of an efficient control exercised by the nation’s representatives as long as the latter were appointed by the government.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., 138.

³⁸ Argetoianu and Neagoe, *Pentru cei de mîine*, vol. III, 130.

³⁹ Ibid., 131.

Argetoianu pleaded in favor of “crowning a genuine constitutional life,” which meant observing the constitution and “broadening the electorate’s civic education and rights to vote.” One of his significant goals was to educate immature citizens so that they could become competent voters. Henceforth followed the project of founding a new party favoring “law and order,” the Constitutional Party. Like others, Argetoianu did not use the concept of *democracy*.⁴⁰ His enthusiasm for the three pillars of reform—constitutional modifications, land expropriation and universal suffrage—is noteworthy:

We have no valid argument to oppose Brătianu, nor can we, conservatives, oppose the principle of democratic reform brought by the leftist wind blowing from Russia. If we lose the war, this vote will have no consequences, but if we win, as I hope it will happen, the universal vote and a broad agrarian reform will become indispensable.⁴¹

In his memoirs, Alexandru Marghiloman focused on the period during and immediately after World War I. Throughout his books, he was only marginally interested in the new constitution and the introduction of universal suffrage and he considered more urgent the need to internationally protect Greater Romania. His diary reveals his neglect of the above-mentioned issues. As part of the negotiations for the country’s Council, equal rights were an efficient argument: “Incuțet [...] only agrees with a union offering complete autonomy; the two others [Ciugureanu, Halippa—n.n.] simply favor the union. I tell them of equal rights, and ministers coming to stay among us, etc.” Additionally, he showed his disdain for the populist ideas proposed by general Averescu: “His program could be summed up as antidynasticism and peasant-run democracy.”⁴² What is striking here is the lack of annotations regarding a new constitution, since Marghiloman did not use the concept of *democracy* in the context of debates over the constitution. From among the reforms of the early interwar period, the agrarian problem drew his attention more than the process of democratization.⁴³

Given the indifference of historians and the majority of the time’s political men as to constitutionally anchoring universal suffrage, it is not surprising that Romanians did not see the elections as a crowning of democratization. In this sense, the renowned politician Grigore Gafencu

⁴⁰ Ibid., 131–2.

⁴¹ Ibid., 196.

⁴² Marghiloman and Neagoe, *Note politice*, vol. III, 119.

⁴³ Ibid., 420–4.

noted that the principles at the basis of Romania's constitutional order (from 1931) were the result of sacrifices assumed during the course of several wars:

Truly, only in a small measure are they [these sacrifices] due to the specific experiences of our country. The elements that have contributed to their emergence are the troubles that almost all European states have experienced over the last century. Yet, our country only assumed these sacrifices through its own offerings. That is why Romania has insisted on placing these sacrifices at the foundation of all great achievements to which we owe the existence of present-day Romania: the Union of the Principalities, the election of a foreign prince, the proclamation of the kingdom and, finally, the creation of Greater Romania.⁴⁴

These unspecified principles (of the legally constituted state and political representation) seemed more likely to be the means towards a state-national goal. Gafencu wrote in February 1931 that governmental parties had to understand that not rhetorics but their efficiency and sacrifice during the economic crisis "would decide upon the fate of democracy."⁴⁵ Here, *democracy* stood for a value in itself, but the alternative of royal dictatorship made that Gafencu was more interested in the freedoms of political people than in the political rights of voters. When, after Charles II's return, many anticipated the end of the National Peasant Party's government, Gafencu used for the first time the phrase "the end of the democratic regime," emphasizing that his party came to power "thanks to the determined, fierce will of the low masses." He later questioned the political influence of the monarch and his partisanship.⁴⁶

The royal mission bearer had never been impartial in point of the political struggles among parties. He had systematically taken a stand against the party which gained the electorate's trust. In order to impose itself, democracy had to keep fighting for ten years and it almost reached the point of starting a revolution with the Alba-Iulia meeting. On the occasion of the reunification of the Regency, isn't this democracy justified to take all the precautions so that such fights won't be necessary anymore and the non-falsified will of the electoral body will manage to impose itself in the future without revolutionary measures and threats? [...] Wasn't it the government's duty (towards the party's history and beliefs) to appoint instead of the most quiet "sovereign" the country had ever had not this or that popular figure but a man whose "modesty and thoroughness" represented a guarantee that he would never falsify at random or out of mere whim the normal game played by our political forces? In contrast, Ferdinand was "a genuine referee of our public life."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Gafencu and Neagoe, *Însemnări politice*, 79–80.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 182–3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

In this case too, the main argument was not represented by the support of democratic elections but by patriarchal responsibility and the monarch's reserve and discretion.

Authentic Democrats and the Others

The limited normative value of the concept of *democracy* in Romanian interwar socio-political languages follows from its insufficient use for distinguishing between democrats and anti-democrats, between those who considered *democracy* a means to reach an end, and authentic democrats who were guided by the highest political principle. Exclusion discourses were frequent in the period preceding World War I and during the time of authoritarian threats in the mid-1930s. From the end of the nineteenth century until World War I, Romania's socialist circles were in need of ideologically harmonizing foreign forms of organization and action (especially those of Narodna Russians and Marxist Germans) with the highly polarized political and socio-economic reality of Romania.⁴⁸ In this respect, most precursors, like Constantin Stere and Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, reached different conclusions.

Being part of a small, leftist-oriented intelligentsia, Stere and Dobrogeanu-Gherea felt obliged to defend themselves against dominant political ideas. At the end of the nineteenth century, the two political thinkers agreed that economy represented an anomaly since it inherited feudal relations from the rural areas alongside a modern political system. Stere noted that Romania's socio-economic modernization followed its own path, which excluded industrial capital. A capitalist evolution in the Marxist sense was neither possible nor welcome in Romania. When his party proved to be incapable to survive, Stere did not find it at all difficult to join the liberals in claiming universal human rights. In contrast, Dobrogeanu-Gherea insisted upon a socialist revolution that would result from Romanian contradictions regarding capitalist modernization, which distinguished itself from "bourgeois parties." Romania's under-development was not structurally conditioned; it was an effect of its economic dependence. That is how neo-slavery was born. Because the practical programs of political parties were almost identical in point of their reformist orientation, Dobrogeanu-Gherea had to theoretically justify the necessity of an

⁴⁸ Harre, *Wege in die Moderne*; Kitch, "Constantin Stere."; Kitch, "Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea."

independent social democratic party. Two books perfectly correspond to this polemic: Dobrogeanu-Gherea's *Neoiobăgia* (*Neo-Slavery*) (1910) and Stere's *Social-democratism sau poporanism?* (*Social Democratism or Populism?*) (1907–1908).⁴⁹

Dobrogeanu-Gherea accepted the label of “advanced democrats” in the case of “populists” because of their good intentions, all this despite the fact that their analysis was “superficial and emotionally fanciful.” Even so, “the social or populist democrat” and “the aristocrat and bourgeois” are on different sides as to the basic questions.⁵⁰ At other points in his argumentation, he opposed “democrats and populists” to “representatives of the interest of large land-owners,” even if the collective term *democrats* did not seem to exclude populists from among the ranks of social democrats and liberals.⁵¹

Even if Dobrogeanu-Gherea did not use the label *democratic* when he named the “bourgeois liberal” regime, he considered that Romania could follow the path of “rural democracy just as Serbia had,” and it could thus have an open path towards an adequate economy “under a superior social, industrial-capitalist, bourgeois-liberal form” in case the dominant class accomplished its historical mission.⁵² For Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *democratic* meant the liberal constitution forged after the Belgian model, and especially its agrarian strategy.⁵³ His choice of adjective shows a modern type of political thought: political reforms could be “liberal” (but not “conservative”) and they became *democratic* when accompanied by adequate socio-economic strategies:

Conservative doctrinaires would protest to any introduction of new liberal institutions, bringing a rather solid argument: why introduce institutions, some more liberal than others, when they are to remain a lie given their inadequacy to our social reality? I consider that our institutions are not liberal enough, I would like them to be more democratic and complemented by universal suffrage; again, to prevent that such institutions remain a lie because they are not suitable to the reality of life, I support the transformation and reformation of this reality—especially the economic one—so that it could be made to agree with the legally constituted superior democratic state.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoiobăgia*.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

A conservative politician oriented towards the extension of royal powers, Petre P. Carp “[wa]s not a democrat, and even less a social democrat.”⁵⁵ In contrast, Take Ionescu was apostrophized as being “conservative-democrat.”⁵⁶ Finally, Dobrogeanu-Gherea wanted to prove that all the political entitling speeches were irrelevant and could not be measured unless one considered the question of an agrarian constitution.⁵⁷ In political circles during the interwar period, *democrat* was not at all used as a political concept. Brătianu focused instead on disqualifying liberalism as an un-Romanian phenomenon from the West. Starting in 1866, he drew the contours of an autochthonous process to extend political rights and equality, and he identified *democracy* with *liberalism*, contesting the *democrat* label as a possible term to be rightfully associated with his conservative enemies:

What else can this 1866 Constitution which has given us constitutional monarchy and a foreign dynasty be than the social and political contract through which our nation, through its representatives, assumes and accepts its basic institutions of the past and present in exchange for the doubtful guarantee necessary for its development: that of domestic stability and prestige abroad? Under all the circumstances occurring since 1866, the national will has always ratified this meaning of our basic pact [...]. Between 1913 and 1923, the liberal leaders of the past generation really deployed a great and bloodshed-free revolution in point of economic, social and political order.⁵⁸

Despite the polemic with conservatives and traditionalists, Brătianu favored a disciplined democracy in the political field or, in his own words, “government for the people” and not “government by the people.”⁵⁹

People’s Spontaneous Democracy

The concept of *democracy* could facilitate the possibility to equate the supposedly spontaneous expression of people’s will with a *democratic* attitude. Even if this would facilitate associating national and democratic discourses, the connotation of the lexical field was completely absent in Romanian historians’ usage from the first half of the twentieth century.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 52–3.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 117.

⁵⁸ Brătianu, *Liberalism și democrație*, 10–15.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9.

Prior to that, neither Tudor Vladimirescu's revolt from 1821 nor the 1848 revolution was associated with *democracy* or *people's will*. This was also true in the case of the national committees organized between 1917 and 1918 by Romanians from various regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or the Tsarist Empire, or by those participating at the Great Mass Assembly in Alba-Iulia on 1 December 1918. This latter event acquired unexpected mythical proportions in later national evocations and it was thought at the time to represent an exemplary democratic support for the agendas favoring autonomy and secession.⁶⁰ The idea of a mass meeting epitomizing a constitutive assembly was inspired by the French Revolution, but at the same time it illustrated as convincingly as possible the attempt to approach the ideal of direct democracy from the old Attica of Antiquity.⁶¹

Such references did not have an echo in Romanian interwar historiography.⁶² P.P. Panaitescu objectively referred to Alba-Iulia, speaking about "Romanians from all the villages and towns of Ardeal" without however qualifying the events as "democratic."⁶³ As a witness in the Country Council's historical decision on Bessarabia's annexation, Ion Nistor minutely described the meeting on 27 March 1918. This was an event that became legendary thanks to the national historiography from later years. Nistor gave details about the teachers, soldiers and citizens' reunion in assemblies and congresses held at various places where they spontaneously decided to organize the Country Council. He demonstrated the legitimacy behind the decision to annex Bessarabia, which was in accord with people's will, but he did not think of applying the concept of *democracy*. Instead, one could derive from his text the idea that the opposition between the enemies and partisans of political equality disappeared in front of the ultimate national goal:

Not even Bessarabian representatives could remain indifferent in the face of these political manifestations; they started to become aware that the time of redemption had come. Convinced of the historical momentum they were experiencing, they forgot past misunderstandings and conservative boyars shook hands with national democrats to unite their patriotic zeal in view of a good and happy guidance of the

⁶⁰ See, for instance, Mușat and Ardeleanu, *România după Marea Unire*.

⁶¹ Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche*, vol. I, 821–35.

⁶² Panaitescu, *Istoria românilor*, 317–24. It is interesting to note that this dimension was not even taken into consideration by the national-communist literature of the 1970s and 1980s: Wim van Meurs, "Demokratie und Demokraten."

⁶³ Panaitescu, *Istoria românilor*, 317–24.

people who had been called through revolution to a new political and national life. Immediately after the break of the revolution, in April 1917, in Kishinev, they laid the foundation of the *Moldavian National Party* [...] which included, among others, [...] Transylvanian and Bukovinian intellectuals and who meant to help Bessarabian brethren with advice and writings towards the reorganization of their political and cultural life running on a new national basis.⁶⁴

In his turn, as a representative of the Romanian state, Alexandru Marghiloman had also been a witness of this decision on the part of the Bessarabian Country Council. If we remember that he had been one of the signers of the Peace Treaty in Bufta and Bucharest and he had had the occasion to follow international political and military evolution, it is striking that he lacked enthusiasm about the National Assemblies in Alba-Iulia and Kishinev. Notions like *democracy* or *popular will* never crossed his mind.⁶⁵ More broadly, the recognition of direct and undisciplined *democracy* proved to be a shortcoming of Romanian political and academic thought.

Conclusions

1. Semasiologically, it is believed that during the first half of the twentieth century (starting from the representativity of the four bibliographic genres herein studied), the concept of *democracy* played a minor role in political debates and it certainly did not act in an ideological-combatant sense. The notion *constitutional* was used instead of the notion *democratic* during this time. In this sense, we should mention the onomasiologic approach proving that the qualitative difference between limited political representation and aristocratic *democracy* was not foregrounded (with the exception of the representatives of the marginalized left). Universal and equal voting rights were more often negatively assessed and associated with the political immaturity of the electorate as well as with the threat of demagoguery. As a consequence, we can notice a “disciplined” or paternalistic reorganization of politics as the vast consensus of the elites.
2. From the point of view of the present moment, not only communism but especially the post-1989 period has led to a reconceptualization of *democracy* and *democratization* and their orientation towards external

⁶⁴ Nistor and Neagoe, *Istoria Basarabiei*, 279.

⁶⁵ Marghiloman and Neagoe, *Note politice*, 119, 125.

influences. By comparison to the interwar and communist periods, post-communist times have seen an intensified, excessive use of the concept. It would seem that debates in Romania are still in an assertive stage, and there is almost no critical dispute about the structure of *democracy*, as it recently occurred in some Western democracies. In view of such a debate, it would be important to explain the languages associated with *democracy* starting from the use of concepts in the interwar period.

3. Three essential desiderata could complete the above case study and make up a comprehensive conceptual history. The first desideratum refers to bibliographic selection, which could extend to reflections on political and academic opinion makers, constitutional and legislative texts, political programs and discourses, and articles from the daily press. The second desideratum refers to the exact period of time one selects to cover. A comparison with communist and even post-communist times would perhaps be characterized by discontinuity and reconceptualization. More relevant from the point of view of context would be a comparison with nineteenth-century concepts. A third desideratum would consist in expanding the classical conceptual history comprising a semasiological analysis of the lexical field to an onomasiological study of the relations between people and rules, between the representatives and the represented. In the long run, it is imperative to consider a European and a regional lexicon respectively in order to classify Romanian concepts and their specificities, just as it has happened in the case of other languages and cultures.

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The Concept of *Progress*: The Fraught Relation between Liberalism and State Intervention

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The Romanian concept of *progres* (*progress*) best corresponds to the German *Fortschritt*—it is a derivation of the same French language word, namely the notion of *progressus* that comes from Latin. The concept entered the Romanian language around 1821, when boyar and Chancellor Dinicu Golescu (1777–1830) went and joined the nobility that had found refuge in Habsburg Transylvania during a revolt. During his brief exile, Golescu became for the first time aware of the comparative backward state of Moldavia and Wallachia, and confronted it. His trips to Western Europe in 1824, 1825 and 1826 completed the image of a serious economic backwardness, which he brought to the attention of Romanian public opinion through detailed descriptions.¹ Gradually, other boyars also started to share his admiration for the economic prosperity of Western Europe. The first Romanian language book of economic studies was published in 1838: *Noțiuni statistice asupra Moldovei* (Statistic data on Moldavia)² by Nicolae Suțu (1798–1871).³ Meanwhile, Ion Ghica (1816–1897) was offering the first public lectures on free trade at Academia Mișăileană from Iași in 1843–1844.⁴

This brief overview reveals three aspects related to the evolution of the concept of *progress*. First of all, the assimilation of the concept was closely tied with Romanian economic thought, which was becoming more and more scientific during the transition period between 1821 and 1866.⁵ On the other hand, the assimilation of the concept was implicitly mirrored

¹ Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor economice*, vol. I, 20f.

² Suțu, *Noțiuni statistice asupra Moldovei*, 81–226.

³ Todosia, *Doctrina Economice*, 185.

⁴ Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor*, 22–8.

⁵ Jörn, “Erfahrungsgeschichten der Moderne,” 550–6.

in linguistic change which was noticeable in the dismissal of the older concept of *dezvoltare* (*development*) from common speech; this was a concept whose etymology was not clear and which best corresponded to the German *Entwicklung*. In the century of Phanariot rule in Moldavia and Wallachia (1714–1821), the concept strictly referred to a circuit of becoming and passing which seemed to occur at God's will. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, history continued to be thought of as having a circular form, which implied its repetitive character.⁶ This understanding in point of using the concept of *development* has been kept until the present, and its goal, compared to that of *progress*, is on the one hand undefined and, on the other, disconnected from the social sphere.

Secondly, since it is borrowed from French, the notion of *progres* (*progress*) subsumes a connection with economic changes within the principalities after the Treaty of Adrianopolis (1829) through which Russia imposed the opening of the lower Danube to European commercial navigation. The deviation of commercial routes from Constantinople to Western Europe and the inclusion of the Danubian principalities within the European capitalist market contributed to an enriched concept of *progres* (*progress*) that acquired new socio-political meanings as well as to the limited use of its antonym, *regres* (*regress*). The two concepts⁷ merged into a linear one, which fostered the progressive optimism of the nineteenth century.

Thirdly, the semantic transformation of the concept of *progres* (*progress*) was closely related to the emergence of the Romanian National Movement. Thus, some boyars in Habsburg exile came into contact with representatives of the Ardeal School. Deeply troubled by the peasants' anxieties from 1784 and disappointed by the post-Josephine period under Leopold II, Orthodox clerks gathered around Samuil Micu (1745–1806), Gheorghe Șincai (1754–1816) and Petru Maior (1761–1821); they expressed their historical, linguistic and legal ideas which sketched a first coherent image of a Romanian community.⁸

The overlapping of the new scientific approaches with those of the ethno-cultural movement⁹ resulted in charging the concept of *progres*

⁶ Koselleck, "Fortschritt," 351–423, especially 351 sq.

⁷ Ibid., 352.

⁸ Fritsche, "Die rumänische Nationalbewegung," 359–434, especially 362 sq.

⁹ See the analysis of concepts on Romanian collective identity as reflected in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Romanian socio-political languages in Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, 117–47, and "Concept of Nation," 153–77.

(*progress*) with political-programmatic content. The early stage of the Romanian National Movement was influenced by a belief borrowed from Western European liberalism, according to which progress was an inevitable process leading the Romanian nation to a better future. Nevertheless, Romanian ideas on free trade as a means to delimit themselves from the Ottoman Empire's foreign commerce politics manifested a series of particularities which made the general label of "economic liberalism" impossible to apply. This happened because by the first half of the nineteenth century they already referred to another type of modernity, which was different from Western European progressive thought.

The thesis of the present article is the following: Romanian progressive thought evolved towards state interventionist radicalizations whose climactic ending point was represented by the Soviet-type planned economy; this attitude was surpassed only after the economic and social changes from 1989–1990. Before that time, Romanian conceptual theorizations were characterized by debating and even criticizing the idea of a mandatory and inevitable progress. Given Romania's economic backwardness, its future orientation was coupled with the fear that the state's independence might be imperiled if one did not keep up with the Western European pace of industrialization. Because of this fear *progres* (*progress*) became a concept associated with planning. The Great Economic Depression from the early 1930s was the perfect occasion for a critique of capitalist transformations and even of capitalism as an economic project. The Western path of development was now explicitly seen as a way to perdition instead of which one had to look for alternative possibilities which better suited Romanian realities.

Approaching such a topic involves some difficulties. There is first of all a semantic complex which not only implies the afore-mentioned concepts of *progress* and *development* but also the ideas of *transformation*, *modernization* and *evolution* as well as their derivatives and antonyms. More than that, just the concept of *progress* is enough to express the entire semantic specter of political, economic, cultural and social transformations over a period of time of almost two hundred years. The necessary research one needs to undertake in view of semantic determination is beyond the limited scope of one single study such as the present one; therefore the explanations that follow will just focus on the relations between the meanings of the concept of *progress* and the economic realities which correspond to it. The method of analysis will consist in examining and assessing the most important Romanian economic magazines and news-

papers,¹⁰ as well as in investigating party programs and programmatic writings of the most renowned economists and politicians.¹¹

I will take into consideration evolutions from Transylvania given the clear-cut differences from economic interpretations in the Old Regime. The thought of people from Transylvania and Banat was influenced by Central European models while beyond the Carpathians there had been from the very beginning a clear orientation towards the Greeks and Russians, and only later did there loom a bridge towards French and German thought. The integration of Banat¹² and Transylvania in the Habsburg economic space presented Romanian economists with totally different problems than those from the Old Kingdom. In order to well understand the phenomenon, the historian must start from other structures of power, other situations of conflict or cooperation, and other cultural influences and inter-communitarian

¹⁰ *Analele economice și statistice*, 1–2/1937 until 8–12/1944; *Argus*, 01.11.1918 until 18.02.1944; *Arhiva pentru știință și reformă socială*, 2–3/1919 until 1–2/1937; *Calendarul*, 14.08.1932 and 24.08.1932; *Convorbiri Literare*, 1–12/1920; *Criterion*, 1/1934 until 5–6/1935; *Economia Națională*, 3/1936 until 11–12/1940; *Independența Economică*, 10–12/1923 until 1/1944; *Lumea Nouă*, 1/1932 until 6–12/1942; *Viața Românească*, 5/1907 until 9/1908; *Zărire*, 1/1932 until 4/1932.

¹¹ Petre, *Doctrinile Partidelor Politice*, 1995. In what regards the economic and political areas, I refer in particular to the writings of Ion Angelescu, Grigore Antipa, Constantin Argetoianu, Petre Aurelian, Alexandru Xenopol, Ion Ionescu de la Brad, political active members of the Brătianu family, Barbu Catargiu, Ion Zelea Codreanu, Nichifor Crainic, Alexandru Cuza, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Ion Duca, Mircea Eliade, Constantin Garoflid, Ion Ghica, Dimitrie Gusti, Spiru Haret, Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Nae Ionescu, Nicolae Iorga, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Virgil Madgearu, Mihail Manoilescu, Ion Mihalache, Grigore Mladenatz, Ion Răducanu, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Mihail Ralea, Victor Slăvescu, Henri Stahl, Constantin Stere, Paul Horia Suci, Nicolae Suțu, Gheorghe Tașcă, Ion Tătos, Victor Vasileoiu, Ion Veverca, Șerban Voinea, Gheorghe Zane, and Ștefan Zeletin.

¹² Banat was the first region to be integrated in the Habsburg economic structure, being directly subordinated to Vienna between 1718 and 1779, its territory the Crown's possession. This fact is important in understanding the historical process of the European integration of those regions inhabited by Romanians; the process started with a region that was geographically situated more towards the West than Transylvania and which did not have eighteenth-century inherited social polarizations (as the neighboring region had); instead it had the possibility to socially, administratively and politically reorganize itself in keeping with the intentions of the new owner. It is in light of this that one should also understand the chance of rapid and opposition-free nobiliary promotion or the quick implementation of religious congregations or of the Austrian cultural and civic code in Banat. Cf. Neumann, *Identități multiple în Europa regiunilor*; see also the documentary and theoretic contributions from Neumann, *Identitate și Cultură*, 18–24, 25–38, 38–47, 77–88, and 347–54 (editors' note, V.N. and A.H.).

relations. This is why my study tries to imagine a vault over time which is meant to represent Transylvanian economists' influence without employing Transylvanian paradigms for understanding the concepts of *progres* (*progress*) and *înapoiere* (*backwardness*) respectively.

The Circular Image of History

Romanian boyars did not only encounter Enlightenment ideas of early liberal economy through Dinicu Golescu. Greek academies from Bucharest and Iași also played a decisive role, whose significance escalated especially during the second half of the eighteenth century when the Enlightenment started to play a more important role in the movements differentiating among Balkan peoples. Academies profited from the relatively autonomous statute of the principalities within the Ottoman Empire. Despite church censorship, some books and manuscripts managed to reach widespread readership figures especially thanks to the input of the neo-Greek diaspora from Moldavia, Wallachia and Northern Italy.¹³ Christian Wolff's writings, Heineccius and Condillac's books of logic, and John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* entered Moldavian-Wallachian intellectual life by round-about ways, translations into Greek being of reference for the entire South-Eastern European part of the continent.¹⁴

In point of the economic field, Phanariot Nicolae Caragea was the first to solicit the implementation of free trade in 1783—seven years after Adam Smith had published *The Wealth of Nations*. In a memoir addressed to the Russian Consul in Constantinople, Caragea considered that the Ottomans' breach of contract was due to the impoverishment of the empire's subjects. Consequences would include discouraging the development of trades, decreased land prices, and the permanent movement of the population, given that the country had already become almost completely depopulated. Free trade could cure at least some of the wounds of this *weak agrarian people*.¹⁵

¹³ On the circulation of information, freedom of consciousness and Neo-Greeks' formation of a modern intelligentsia, including shortcomings and backwardness because of radical-conservative orientations, see especially Paschalis Kitromilides, *Iluminismul neoelen. Ideile politice și sociale* [Neo-Hellenic enlightenment. Political and social ideas] (foreword by Răzvan Theodoreescu, transl. from Greek by Olga Cicanci. Bucharest: Omonia, 2005) (editors' note, V.N. and A.H.).

¹⁴ Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 124.

¹⁵ Murgescu, "Avatarurile unui concept," 819–45, especially 821; and "Comerț și politică în relațiile româno-otomane," 573–90, especially 574 and 578.

These documents stand proof to modernity's difficult start. Military confrontations after the Peace of Kuciuk-Kainargi (1774) brought some progress in the society of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.¹⁶ The ever greater military needs of Russia and the ever greater civil needs of agricultural products on the part of Western Europe opened the appetite for the Romanian cereal market. Increased prices obliged Ottomans to practice a more flexible price politics so that when Russia imposed the opening of the lower Danube for European commercial navigation through the 1829 Adrianopolis Agreement, the competition represented by great European powers became a permanent stimulus for the production of wheat in this region.

Incomes resulting from cereal commerce became the basis for the accumulation of capital, and access to Western markets was the guarantee for maintaining the power of the bourgeoisie. Phanariots were confronted with the dilemma of choosing between loyalty to the sultan, their social and economic dependence on autochthonous boyars, and ensuring their own rule. In search of compromises that could maintain Ottoman control, boyars' own power and the autonomous statute of the principalities,¹⁷ they were forced to intervene in the common law of the old boyars causing some damages to old privileges and a shake-down of boyars' hierarchies. The climax was reached following Constantin Mavrocordat's reform efforts: in 1743 and 1746 he conditioned the granting of privileges on taxing boyars for holding high state positions and he formally abrogated slavery in 1746 in Wallachia and in 1749 in Moldavia.¹⁸

The perturbation of social hierarchies brought about the opposition of autochthonous boyars and undermined the Phanariots' power. But, just as principles, autochthonous boyars were in a confusing situation in what regards their interests and loyalties, tradition and modernization. Landowning boyars were hostile to the Phanariots, the ones who ensured Ottoman dominance as the Sultan's officials. Phanariot reforms were considered the main causes of the downfall of the feudal world because of arbitrary actions and the corruption of Ottoman messengers.¹⁹ On the other hand, Greek culture symbolized high Christian spirituality in the Balkan area; alongside Byzan-

¹⁶ Troebst, "Politische Entwicklungen der Neuzeit," 83.

¹⁷ Durandin, *Histoire des Roumains*, 82.

¹⁸ *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VII/1, 139; Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians*, 141.

¹⁹ Georgescu, "The Romanian Boyars in the 18th Century," 31–40, particularly 32. For a detailed analysis of the era and for an interpretive alternative, see Murgescu, *România și Europa* (editors' note, V.N. and A.H.).

tine and post-Byzantine contributions, it seemed to offer the only intellectual movement capable to impose itself in the region.²⁰

Developing a rival perspective on the future of the principalities at the end of eighteenth century represents a fascinating topic of research. At bottom, however, the various state projects had a common goal: they all tried to reconstitute the future which was to be henceforth glorified under the label of *the golden era* while, with the passage of time, the actors came to be idealized as national heroes. In the case of Phanariot reformatory efforts, this implied resorting to Byzantine traditions. One could understand this given that, after the disappearance of the Byzantine Empire, the Greeks only came to rule in Moldavia and Wallachia in the eighteenth century. Thus, Grigore Callimachi revitalized Byzantine court traditions in 1762 by ordering that the imperial court and state ceremony be recorded in writing. Hellenization was also present in the codifications of Alexandru Ipsilanti (1774–1782 and 1796–1797) at whose basis one found the legal codes of Byzantine Emperor Justinian Rhynomete II (685–695 and 705–711).²¹

The first to propose a critique of the Greek influence in the Romanian Principalities was Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723), the last autochthonous prince of Moldavia. A great admirer of Peter the Great, even if he had lost his crown because of the Prut campaign against the Ottomans, in 1711 Cantemir went into exile to Russia where he wrote many political pamphlets. The ideas of combatting Ottoman rule and of emphasizing Romanian boyars' historical rights were due to him.²² A biography of Peter the Great in Romanian translation circulated rather widely around 1749 and the admiration bestowed upon him was also transferred to Tsarina Ekaterina the Great. It was during this period that the Wallachian divan for the first time suggested the union of Moldavia and Wallachia and hoped to recuperate historical rights.²³ The Peace of Kuciuk-Kainargi (1774) included old privileges and finally the Tsarina even proposed a project concerning the reconstitution of the old Dacian Kingdom in the region situated to the North of the Danube. She gave up the idea, however, because of the opposition of Joseph II.²⁴

²⁰ Tzermias, *Neugriechische Geschichte*, 68 sq.

²¹ Cront, "La loi agraire byzantine dans les pays du sud-est européen," 49–60, particularly 49.

²² Vlăduțescu, *Neconvențional*, 8–11.

²³ Fritsche, "Die rumänische Nationalbewegung," 361.

²⁴ Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor*, 219.

The Period of Transition from 1821 to 1866

The 1821 parallel revolts of Philiki Hetairia and Tudor Vladimirescu and his followers represented a second crossroads in the perception of historical evolution. In the context of the already mentioned opening of the lower Danube in 1829 and of recognizing the Organic Regulations in 1831, a skeptical attitude towards the circular conception of history was born and there followed an increased level of interest for the Western concept of *progress*. We have already mentioned the importance of the exile movement of Romanian boyars and the Ardeal School. Both the Organic Regulations of 1831–1832 and the programs of the 1848 revolution were the expression of this process, characterized by the simultaneous presence of traditional and modern elements. The most important goal of the Regulations, which had played the role of Constitution prior to 1866, was to maintain the nobility's privileges and feudal relations of dependence.²⁵ Simultaneously, however, this code of laws was extended via some reforms meant to ensure an efficient administrative mechanism. The attempts to separate powers were correlated with a powerful executive branch and with the country's centralization in view of modernizing the system of finances and planning the annual state budget.²⁶

A stimulus for the programs of the 1848 revolutions was represented by the relation between traditional interests of the aristocracy and reform demands (which predominated). In a petition from March 1848, the revolt from Moldavia led by Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891) and which reflected this relation between the old and the new asked people to observe civic freedoms and the existent laws represented by the Organic Regulations.²⁷ At first sight, identification with the French revolutionary program was so strong that the differences throughout the country seemed to have faded in the background. Some “oversights” on the side of Romanian revolutionary programs were caused by the fact that the class of economically disfavored boyars took over the ideas of revolutionary liberalism and used them to their own interest. Unlike Germany and France, Moldavia and Wallachia did not have a revolutionary parliament; they only had a government of the revolution and commissions responsible for elaborating

²⁵ Hitchins, “Desăvârșirea Națiunii Române,” in 287–406, particularly 290 *sq*; Sundhaussen, “Die Transformation des Dorfes und der Landwirtschaft im Balkanraum vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg,” 319–35, particularly 320 and 324.

²⁶ Cipăianu, “Legislația Agricolă,” 89–95, particularly 89.

²⁷ Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor*, 128.

reforms. Revolutionary structures declared goals which made it clear that city artisans were not the center of interest but, just as in the past, what mattered most was the export of cereals from which boyars were to have the most profit. Such goals included the reorganization of the financial and credit systems and the elimination of guilds and of all commercial obstacles.²⁸

Attempts to simultaneously restore and modernize state feudal order corresponded to deviations coming from some Romanian economists who supported liberal classical economy. The ratio between boyars' interests and the postulate of free trade simply led to negating the possibility of a private general-human initiative by the first Romanian economists. Ion Ghica's idea that the "laissez-faire state" could only function if it followed strict moral rules must be interpreted starting from the premise that this very morality was contested in the case of unprivileged low mass classes.²⁹ The decline of the great boyars brought about a new vision on the mass of people, which were now conceived as honest and moral; this portrait functioned as a conservative theory of modernization until the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁰ As a consequence, conservative boyars related their freedom towards the state only to their own social class and not to their faith in all citizens' equality and freedom. This was attested by the confrontation between the conservative prime minister Barbu Catargiu and the liberal 1848 revolutionary Mihail Kogălniceanu in view of liberating peasants (1864).³¹

The Linear Image of History and the Capacity to Plan Ahead brought by Transformation

In a conservative sense, free trade was the expression of understanding a politics that did not associate the transformations of social structure with economic development. During Al. I. Cuza's reign feudal social models were kept. Yet, the abrogation of slavery was a first sign that prefigured the passage towards a linear understanding of history and towards faith in the promises of a Western-type progress.

²⁸ Berindei, "Programme et plate-formes socio-politiques," 67–73, particularly 68–71.

²⁹ Demetrescu, "Liberalismul economic," 261–74, particularly 264 and 268 sq.

³⁰ Iorga, "The Romanian Nationalist as Historian," 473–86, particularly 479 sq.

³¹ Catargiu, *Discursuri Parlamentare*, xi–xviii; Berindei and Adăniloie, *Reforma agrară din 1864*, 131–43.

Unfortunately for the evolution of the principalities, this change did not benefit from favorable circumstances. It was initiated at a time when the European scene was going through a socio-economic decline that had started in 1870. Meanwhile, the great European powers had to take measures regarding agrarian protectionism. The young Romanian state henceforth had to compete with cereal exporters beyond the ocean from the U.S., Canada and Australia. The contract signed in 1875 by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy regarding free trade seemed to confirm doubts concerning the compulsory nature of progress; it ended seven years later through a customs war that was catastrophic for Romania. At this time, Romania's industrialization seemed necessary given the close-down of agrarian markets. At the same time, the promises of classical liberalism in view of making profit as a result of natural harmony on the world market seemed to contradict this necessity.

Economists at this stage oriented themselves after the assertions of the German scholar Friedrich List. From the time of the customs war, Petre Aurelian founded the Society for Economic Politics; its intention in 1887 was to translate List's book *The National System of Political Economy*.³² In fact, several complex passages had already appeared in 1883 in a study by the journalist I. Făgărășanu, the translator of the work of jurist Ioan Papiniu (1853–1925). As a diplomat in Budapest, Salonika and Sofia, the latter was active in various commissions that dealt with the elaboration of customs tariffs and commercial contracts and was in personal contact with the German economist.³³ The reception of List's work was unusual since most art critics and journalists completely ignored his theory which favored some secondary aspects.

His long-term goal was to accomplish the unity of humankind and eternal peace, ideas that had not at all been mentioned in the Romanian press. The association of spiritual and social means was enlightening in the German economist's view and conditioned successful industrialization more than a protectionist politics of commerce.³⁴ Yet, even though educational training, a legally constituted state, modern institutions, and civic liberties were solicited by the National Liberal Party in parliamentary debates,³⁵ they were not included in economic writings. In this way, they

³² List, *Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie*, 1982.

³³ Wendler, "Die List-Rezeption in Rumänien," 453–70, particularly 462; Vasileoiu, *Influența lui Fr. List*, 9 sq.

³⁴ Schultz, "Introduction," 9–25, particularly 15.

³⁵ Kogălniceanu, *Îmbunătățirea soartei țăranilor*.

were associated in Romanian public opinion with political modernization and not with economic expansion. The danger of such a rupture in Romanian progressive thought was to be confirmed with the passage of time.

The cleavage between industrialized Western Europe and agrarian Eastern Europe gradually became more obvious, so that the impossibility of overcoming it at the desired pace made efforts of development take the form of a new anti-Western attitude. In search of adequate explanations regarding the economic crisis from the 1870s and 1880s, the state of economic regress was theorized as an expression of the European power (im)balance. This interpretation initiated the transformation of List's protectionism to its more radical variant of the "by ourselves/on our own" politics. This was more than a radical protectionism; it was an alternative strategy for the development of the National Liberal Party, which held that it could offer a third way out and perceived capitalist modernization in a new light.

The close relation between the state's intervention in the economy and political authoritarianism could be seen clearly when the National Liberal Party entered a deep crisis after it surprisingly lost the elections in 1919 in favor of the alliance between the Peasants Party and the National Party from Transylvania.³⁶ Back to power in 1922, national-liberals regulated political anxieties in a manner that forbade the political emancipation for the lower classes. True enough, they theoretically persevered in building a representative parliamentary system, including periodic elections, a multi-party system, independent justice, and the observance of basic rights and freedoms. In actual fact, this democracy was actually based on rigged elections which caricatured any authentic democratic initiative and placed the actual practice of national-liberal governing in total contradiction with classical liberalism.³⁷

Aware of the crisis while simultaneously maintaining their authoritarian positions, the hinted-at intellectuals were now obliged to justify a method of government practiced in the name of liberalism, even though it had become obvious that in its Romanian variant it no longer corresponded to this economic trend. Thus, within the so-called liberalism, three schools developed simultaneously:

- a) The best-known representative of Solidarism, Gheorghe Tașcă (1875–1964), hoped to establish a new theoretical basis of classical liberalism

³⁶ Hitchins, *The Romanians*, 405–409.

³⁷ Dogan, *Sociologie politică*, 163.

by considering the crisis of political liberalism. This was why he distanced himself from the position of the National Liberal Party and sustained the need of a real democracy, becoming a declared enemy of the industrial elite. The inconsistency of his argumentation consisted in the fact that he accepted Romania's ethno-linguistic diversity at the time as a point of departure in fostering democratic reflection, but this also presupposed the existence of social harmony during the debate. This consensus was almost impossible to uphold during the troubled inter-war period. To give weight to his arguments claiming liberal-democratic freedoms, he preferred to talk about the so-called "democracy on the move," yet without concretely defining its form and meaning.³⁸

- b) Starting from the fictional solidarity of various social classes and ignoring the poor support given to the electorate for the governmental industrialization program, the prime minister and president of the National Liberal Party, Ion G. Duca (1879–1933) decided that he could prevent the failure of industrialization by a controlled organization of Romanian economy, politics and society. Seen as a central element, the "organization" conferred a deeply authoritarian note to this option. Because they could not count on the "laissez-faire" democratic state or on free markets in point of reaching their economic goals, both the state and the economy had to be reorganized in a controlled manner.³⁹ What ensued was a mimetic type of democracy behind which were hidden authoritarian inclinations which finally evolved towards dictatorial social representations, as in the case of Mihail Manoilescu.
- c) In 1923 Mihail Manoilescu published an article entitled "Neo-Liberalism" in which he attacked the economic theories of classical liberalism. The two reasons behind his critique were represented by the idea that this economic theory seemed to support the private benefits of the few while automatically accepting social injustice. The orientation of criticism towards unveiling the interests of economic moguls and the public denunciation of mimetic democracy distinguished Manoilescu from I.G. Duca. Even if both theoreticians considered that a person's freedom remained utopian if not accompanied by his or her economic emancipation, unlike Duca, Manoilescu did not conclude that this desideratum could be achieved through the manifestation of popular will. While Duca had in mind avoiding a communist revolu-

³⁸ Tașcă, "Liberalismul economic," 124–43, particularly 124 sq. and 133–43.

³⁹ Duca, "Doctrina liberală," 144–54.

tion when referring to the necessity of social peace,⁴⁰ Manoilescu tried to build a balanced social system in which everyone belonged to a hierarchic class in keeping with the social function accomplished. National solidarity thus had the effect of a hierarchic social structure which adequately reflected society's needs.⁴¹

Manoilescu's ideas represented the climax of the national-liberal model of development, but they simultaneously indicated its failure within the capitalist economic order. His defensive attitude towards the masses' access to power was not only an individual guilt but also the expression of numerous theoretical dilemmas to which politicians had no answers at the time. The most important unresolved conflict consisted in a contradictory development of industry in relation to domestic markets. The Romanian capital was destined to investments mainly originating from agriculture and from abroad. Because it meant to bring down the contribution of foreign capital, fearing the great powers' influence on the domestic scene, the country was even more dependent on agricultural funds. The most reasonable way towards the accumulation of capital would have been that of village modernization which could have finally and happily facilitated the development of a national industry out of autochthonous funds.

Romanian elites could not allow themselves to be so patient, though. If we ignore the "industrial war"⁴² of modernity which was not however accessible to agrarian countries, the end of the nineteenth century already showed the weaknesses of the country's on-going direction of development. Romania's industrialization did not only represent the attempt to modernize the country in order to bring it closer to a technically superior West, but also the attempt to get over the crisis of the agrarian revolution. The decline of agricultural prices starting in 1870 could not be avoided by any means, not even by the modernization of agriculture. As a consequence, quick industrialization was then considered the only logical step, which would not only have meant avoiding exchange relations on the global market, but also offering the rural unemployed population jobs in the cities.

This attempt to solve the economic situation faced obstacles which finally proved to be insurmountable. The few funds obtained from among the poor peasantry were inefficiently used and led to the drainage of this

⁴⁰ Roberts, *Rumania*, 193.

⁴¹ Manoilescu, "Neoliberalismul," 2–9 and 15.

⁴² Berend, "Economic Nationalism," 29–37, particularly 29.

poor source of capital. In this way, the domestic market on which the Romanian industry depended, and which was isolated from external markets, was ruined. The sacrifice Manolescu asked of peasants for the well-being of the nation was not only futile and vain but also prejudicial to the economy. Because of its impact on Romanian economy, the political aspect was thus an essential aspect we should not overlook. Following the option for industry and against the development of domestic markets and the modernization of villages, the big industrialists caused a long-term crisis in agriculture. Within a functional democracy the peasants would have had the necessary tools and abilities for refusing such a politics. Nevertheless, the industrialists' authoritarianism was strictly tied to their economic politics from the very start, and the fascist stage was to prove that the most important economists (such as Mihail Manolescu) were in real fact the fiercest enemies of Romanian democracy.

Peasantism

Similar events were also valid in the case of peasantism. If industrialists opted for the industrialization of Romania and against democracy, peasant advocates tried the opposite variant. They set a peasant democracy at the center of their own utopia and thereby neglected economic theories and practices. The reference to the peasants' proletarianization also had major relevance for peasantism since people reproached the "capitalist colonization" which would impoverish the nation and particularly the Romanian village. While conservatives and neo-liberals searched for alternative possibilities of modernization within Western capitalism, peasant party members abandoned this desideratum. Since the aspiration to keep traditional rural economy and modernity's orientation towards economic development could not function simultaneously, both champions of industrialization and peasantry faced the failure of their theories. The majority of the Romanian population was against requests to reform the state and pushed leading elites towards a conflicting state between political and economic modernization.

The question of whether the industrialization of Romanian national economy would indeed be possible was broached by Constantin Stere in 1907, in his dispute with socialist Dobrogeanu-Gherea. Stere refuted the opinion according to which the capitalist development of a country would be inevitable. He invoked the Russian nationalist V. Vornokov, who had made reference to the absence of sale markets inside the country and abroad in order to prove the impossibility of implementing capitalism in

predominantly agrarian countries.⁴³ The most important ideologue of peasantism, Virgil Madgearu, combined these ideas with the studies of the Soviet economist A. Ciaianov in the wake of World War I. In 1923, the latter tried to find an answer to the following questions: Why do peasant farmsteads prove to be extremely viable in comparison with a salary-based capitalism, and why have they developed conceptual tools that are significantly different from classical economic theory?⁴⁴ For Madgearu, industrialization no longer represented a theoretical problem but an indisputable fact; moreover, it was considered to be a national necessity at a time when Romanian agrarian exports were considered under-developed or non-profitable.⁴⁵ At the same time, drawing on Ciaianov's work, Madgearu rejected the idea that a capitalist economy would be the cause of the exploitation of modern peasants.⁴⁶

The major problem of the peasant party's economic politics was the contradiction between the desire to keep traditional peasant farmsteads and the issue of modern economic development; unfortunately none of the three above-mentioned thinkers tackled this issue. Some of them related to Ciaianov, who had described an economic order that would not know modern profit. In fact, Ciaianov was not after motivating the peasant farmstead's capacity of development; he only meant to maintain its viability standing. How such an economic vision could be framed within modernity has not been answered to date. In the meantime, cooperative associations had to indicate a way to put an end to the exploitation of peasants by large landowners. Capital from abroad would have allowed a certain process of mechanization and therefore a more profitable work method; in this way, credits would have been paid back by export-based revenues in the peasant party members' view. This line of argumentation failed to take into consideration one important aspect: peasant farmsteads were not at all oriented towards exportation. For centuries on end they had attempted to ensure a minimum level of subsistence and not the increase of living standards understood in a modern sense.

In its turn, the "open door" economic and financial politics practiced by agrarians had been on a slippery ground from the very beginning. Unlike the champions of industrialization, who defined themselves through the expression "by ourselves/on our own," in this case foreign

⁴³ Stere, "Socialism sau Poporanism?," 170–93, particularly 174–6.

⁴⁴ Tschajanow, *Die Lehre von der bäuerlichen Wirtschaft*, 40, 111.

⁴⁵ Ioachim, "Democratizarea capitalului," *Argus*, 08.09.1919, 1.

⁴⁶ Madgearu, "Teoria economiei țărănești," 1–20; *Țărănismul*, 68–75.

capital was considered a stimulus for economic development and not an obstacle in its way. The national-liberal politicians showed their discontent with the high degree of foreign influence on national politics and economy and they tried to reject foreign capital despite the country's capital deficit. This was how the agrarian economic politics tackled capital deficit, which was preventing investments in the countryside and represented the most problematic obstacle in the path of development. In contrast, according to the agrarians, foreign capital and free trade could prevent attempts to establish a monopoly on domestic industry and to indirectly exploit the rural milieu.

In this respect, many peasant party members focused on economic liberalism immediately after the end of World War I; they hoped that through it they could adapt "artificially proliferated industries" to the needs of under-developed agrarian states.⁴⁷ The "open door" policy upheld a completely agrarian strategy that was opposed to the national-liberal policy of industrialization; they even suggested the possibility of some sort of de-industrialization if "artificial industries" did not manage to adapt themselves to the needs of autochthonous consumers (especially peasants) and to make do without state-run support measures. In 1939, Madgearu explained the fact that some sort of support on the state's part was necessary; this was needed following the structural specificities of national economies from South-Eastern Europe. In these regions, state-run industrialization should ensure jobs to the unemployed rural population. Madgearu fiercely opposed the monopolist tendencies of the capitalist economy and understood directionality or state guidance as the transfer of the monopolies into the state's hands. He did not consider industry to be an end in itself but a means sustaining peasants' independence in the face of price increases on the capitalist world market and increased possibilities of revenue and consumption.⁴⁸ These concessions had nothing in common with capitalism properly speaking.

Planning Ideas

The start of the Great Depression in 1929 meant the end of both the progressivist national-liberal thought and the peasant one, including all their difficulties and challenges. Young economists like Paul Horia Suciuc and

⁴⁷ Madgearu, "Împrumutul extern și refacerea economică," *Argus*, 17. 06. 1923, 1.

⁴⁸ Madgearu, *La politique économique extérieure de la Roumanie 1927–1938*, 19 sq.

Ion Veverca loomed on the academic scene. Very few data on these PhD candidates can be found in the specialized literature. In the 1930s they shared the same fate as Romania's entire young generation, a university career being denied to them. After the end of World War II, their situation did not change given their fascist past. The result of this double exclusion was that bibliographic encyclopedias remained silent and revealed next to nothing about this generation (with the exception of some theoretical articles). The only certain thing is that a majority of them no longer studied in France, as it had happened previously with the youths of the principalities; instead, they went to Mussolini's Italy where they became followers of fascist economic models. Back in their native country, they supported authoritarian regimes and through their publications⁴⁹ they first prepared Charles II's royal dictatorship (1938–1940) and then Ion Antonescu's military dictatorship (1940–1944). From an economic point of view, their ideas were directed towards the concept of a so-called "state-controlled economy" which was more and more clearly promoting national-socialist models.

The idea of a state-gearred economy was not new in Romania. Already in 1875 Petre Aurelian had broached the topic in his major work *Terra Nostra*. In his view, planning would establish goals for economic life to which every person should become subordinated in his or her sphere of activity.⁵⁰ C.I. Băicoianu, secretary-general of the Ministry of Agriculture and director of the National Bank of Romania published an article entitled "Our Program" in the 1898 issue of magazine *Economia Națională* (*National Economy*); he therein solicited a long-term economic program for the country's development.⁵¹ Economic planning in Romania did not represent a way out for a crisis-struck industrial country, as it happened in Germany; instead it was a reaction to structural economic deficiencies that had been brought to the foreground at the end of the nineteenth century. Planning ideas were not only a characteristic of a state-controlled economy; they appeared as a reaction to perturbed economic processes and could become permanent if the country was attributed a long-term peripheral position on world markets.

The first adequate definition of a "state-controlled economy" in Romanian economic thought only appeared in 1938 following the complete translation of the eponymous book by the Czech economist Karel Engliš. Unlike

⁴⁹ Veverca, "Destinul capitalismului," 150–4; Avram, "Sfârșitul economiei mondiale capitaliste," 171–7; Rădulescu-Pogoneanu, "Criza regimului capitalist," 668–80; Suciu, "Criza sistemului economic liberal," (excerpt).

⁵⁰ Aurelian, "*Terra Nostra*," in *Opere Economice*, 147–73, particularly 149 sq.

⁵¹ Băicoianu, "Programul nostrum," 1 sq.

contemporary Romanian commentators, his work proposed the state's partial guidance that would only take into consideration the critical aspects of Romanian economic life but not the national economy in its entirety. The essence of a state-controlled economy would be solidarity, its representatives being compared with a parent who watches the children as they play. Just as a parent only interferes when the situation becomes dangerous, the state should merely oversee the economic game of entrepreneurs and only interfere when they risk deviating from the normal course.⁵²

In the preface to the book, the then president of the National Bank, Mitiță Constantinescu, showed a certain reserve towards the political implications of a state-controlled economy. If in the preface he discussed the crisis of capitalism and expressed his hope of getting over it thanks to Englis's model,⁵³ the journalist E.C. Decusara visibly hardened the tone when he declared that Englis's economic solidarity was no longer viable by comparison to classical liberalism.⁵⁴ His harsh tone mainly resulted from the differences he observed between moderate Czech control over the economy and Romania's state-controlled economy which was considerably more radical. The two economic approaches were different from one another following their choice as to: a) the policy of prices and industrialization; b) economic planning or the promotion of a free market economy; c) the use of authoritarian or democratic government. The following opinions were representative within Romanian debates:

- a) Already in 1936 a former governor of the National Bank, Victor Slăvescu (1891–1977), thought that the state could influence prices but would not fulfill its mission by that measure alone. A national policy of industrialization would be more important since it could equally encompass all economic sectors.⁵⁵
- b) Industrial measures of control became a general requisite of economic debates in 1934 when two PhD candidates from Italy, Ion Veverca and Ion Tatos, signaled the fact that a country's surface and wealth were of secondary importance during an economic crisis. Instead an authoritarian national economy was necessary, one capable to clearly satisfy people's needs.⁵⁶

⁵² Englis, *Economia dirijată*, 13–16, 61–8, 114.

⁵³ Mitiță Constantinescu, "Economia dirijată," *Argus*, 06.04.1938, 1, 31.

⁵⁴ E.C. Decusara, "Economia dirijată," *Argus*, 17.04.1938, 1.

⁵⁵ Slăvescu, *Curs de introducere în științele economice*, 124.

⁵⁶ Veverca, "Viziunea economiei românești," 182–6, particularly 185; Tatos, "Intervenționismul în agricultură," 45–51, particularly 51.

- c) Focusing on a critique of democracy, the journalist Vladimir Alexandrescu defined state-controlled economy in the sense of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, who correlated a society's moral development with the inner forces of the economy. The influence of Italian fascism was most clearly present in Alexandrescu's contention that a systematic plan for all production branches could be better implemented in a dictatorship than in a democracy.⁵⁷

The ideas of economists, also including some not mentioned above, indicate that unlike debates from the Czech republic, Romanian discourses became radicalized around the mid-1930s. All these critiques never indicated a plan which could be put into practice by politicians; instead they pointed to divergent and fragmentary ideas within speeches that little by little disintegrated under the pressure of the domestic political crisis and the foreign economic crisis. Herein lies one reason why Czechoslovakia persisted in maintaining democracy and capitalism while Romania was more and more rapidly turning towards a dictatorship.

Especially praxis showed the serious rapprochement towards the national-socialist economic theory. Yet the actual principle of state-controlled economy was exposed in 1936 by the announcement of the four-year plan and the total freeze of prices. Henceforth the national-socialist regime tried to modify the conditions for the functioning of factories so that their activity would simultaneously promote the state's external economic goals. This also meant the existence of numerous interventions on individual markets and the state's manipulation of prices, since the state became the major agent of economic development.⁵⁸

During this period, Romanian economists asked for a systematic planning of all production branches. Apart from the development of industry, the five-year plan proposed by King Charles II in March 1940 was primarily oriented towards the rise of agricultural production. The surfaces for wheat cultivation were reduced by 800,000 hectares and those for maize cultivation by 500,000 hectares in order to put up with the price gap on global markets. The surfaces thus gained were to be cultivated with oleaginous, textile, and medicinal plants. Additionally, the cultivation of vegetables was meant to improve peasants' nutrition, and the minimum salaries of agricultural workers were likely to end the acute famine that

⁵⁷ Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul Român*, 6–31.

⁵⁸ Buchheim and Scherner, "Anmerkungen zum Wirtschaftssystem des Dritten Reiches," 81–97, particularly 96.

had taken hold of the country. The plan also included a program of technical modernizations, as in the case of projects for irrigation canals and the use of fertilizers.⁵⁹

The application of the five-year plan failed together with Charles' unfortunate foreign policy. International tensions and Hitler's attempts to institute a new European order were followed by the dissolution of the Small Entente, which had guaranteed Romania's territorial integrity through the Peace Treaty from Versailles. The 1940 Vienna Dictate through which Romania lost a part of Transylvania and, shortly after, Southern Dobrogea, caused revolts. The king had to renounce his throne in September 1940 and pass on the power to general Antonescu, a situation which brought Romania close to the Axis states.

The regulation of the Romanian economy and the ever stronger German influence caused a new transformation of economic thought immediately after declaring war with the Soviet Union in 1941. The plan that had until then harmonized individual economic sectors and the stimulation of a better development changed into a war economy which deeply interfered with national economic structures. Neglecting the industry of consumer goods in favor of armament became a constant feature of this new economic orientation alongside the fierce exploitation of petrol resources for the German war machine.

Not even in this case can one explain economic measures only in relation to German interests. Wartime economy became a model when the Odessa battles (August 1941) and the Stalingrad fights (August 1942–February 1943) proved the Romanian army's inefficient supplies of weaponry, clothes and food. Soon after the battle of Odessa, the journalist Petre Nemoianu evoked the German food rationalization which sooner or later was to become common throughout the whole of Europe. Yet, the journalist's observation meant nothing else but the simple reception of German ideas. In his article entitled "The State-Controlled Market or Forced Economy" in the journal *Analele economice și statistice* [Economic and statistical annals], Nemoianu offered a synthetic view of the book published by W. Hasselbach, the chief of the Reich Agricultural Department, entitled *The Market Organization of Forced Economy*. The book foresaw the fulfillment of some sort of equilibrium between food offer and people's needs.⁶⁰

This opportunism, which manifested itself in various fields against a background of social confusion and political authoritarianism, was not

⁵⁹ Roberts, *Rumania*, 213.

⁶⁰ Nemoianu, "Piața dirijată," 467–78, particularly 467.

only a preoccupation for journalists such as Nemoianu. Even thinkers like Mihail Manoilescu started to evince a superficiality that could not be found in their previous works and began to get entangled in all sorts of contradictions whose negation would not have constituted too much of an issue even for amateurs in the field. What resulted from this deficiency in critical thought was not only the breakdown of scientific objectivity, but also the complete disintegration of the academic world after 1940. Most specialized journals stopped appearing before 1942 because of a lack of money and authors.

Given the complete cessation of scientific debates, the communists' imposition of a Soviet economic model in the slightly short period between 1949 and 1951 did not face difficulties. The centrally controlled economy became completely planned, all the decisions being taken by central institutions, including those regarding private consumption. The plan did no longer limit itself to macro-economic measures and data; it regulated the production of all economic areas in the slightest details. Economic success was now indicated only by a comparison between the plan's goals and the degree to which they were fulfilled. Financial indicators such as the ratio between offer and demand no longer influenced decisions, but they only served to limit and control planning decisions.⁶¹

The new political-economic course initiated by Nikita Hrușciov in 1953—after Stalin's death—did not bring about institutional reforms, but the redistribution of resources was now used especially for strengthening real estate investments and the re-organization of a part of the weapon industry towards the production of consumer goods. It is surprising, however, that even though Romania changed its diplomatic attitude towards the Soviet Union in 1965, it did not see any notable changes in point of the functioning of the planned economy, as it happened, for instance, in Hungary or Yugoslavia. Reforms such as "the directives for improving the management of the national economy" (October 1967) or "the law regarding the organization and management of state socialist units" (October 1971) did not represent a fundamental change in how the control was exercised upon the economy; they only improved the instruments of this control.⁶²

⁶¹ Brus, *Geschichte der Wirtschaftspolitik*, 53 sq.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 379–99.

Continuity and Discontinuity

If we look with hindsight at the various models of development and progress options, we can see how the image of an amazing continuity is shaped. Soviet-type planned economy seemed to logically fit in a series of radicalizations which finally ended with the state's confiscation of any economic initiative. This economic evolution started a) from the free trade of Romanian boyars in the first half of the nineteenth century and continued with b) moderate educational fees after the models of Friedrich List, with c) high protectionist but limited tariffs for the domestic industry at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, with d) unlimited protectionist tariffs in the 1920s, with e) the beginning of state planning in point of a controlled economy starting with the Great Depression, and with f) significant interventions in Romania's economic structure during World War II. Within this series, socialist planned economy only seems to represent a last consistent step of state interventionism which had already been obvious in Romanian political economy from the end of the nineteenth century.

The hypothesis that there existed some continuity between the communist strategy of development and its previous models is in fact supported by the overlapping of thoughts, the assimilation of ideas belonging to personalities of the interwar period, and the theories sustained by communists. Manoiilescu was arrested in 1948 and died two years later of typhoid fever in the well-known prison of Jilava. In 1951 he was condemned "in absentia" to 15 years in prison, and his family only learnt of his death in 1958.⁶³ Many intellectuals who did not profit of the end of the war in order to emigrate to Western Europe or Latin America shared similar fates. But crimes should not distract one's attention since Communists took the strategies of development out of their much-debated ideological context and integrated them in the Marxist economic theory.

A changed form of reception occurred in the 1950s through Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and especially during the short-lived liberalization initiated by Nicolae Ceaușescu starting in 1965. This change was possible because—unlike many Central and Eastern European states—the faction of Romanian communists around the Moscow-loyal Anna Pauker was dismissed by Dej during the period of Stalinization. Both Dej and Ceaușescu spent their youths in Romanian prisons and not in schools

⁶³ Natalia Manoiilescu-Dinu, *Schița sentimentală de portret* [Sentimental portrait sketch], unpublished manuscript, 26.

training Russian personnel. Thus their political socialization was primarily formed through debates regarding developments in the interwar period. These debates seemed to have been more influential on the tough national re-orientation of Romanian socialism in the 1970s and 1980s than the theoretical evolutions from the Soviet Union.

Romania was the only socialist country apart from the Democratic Republic of Germany in which a new edition of Friedrich List's *National System* was published in 1973. Even more interesting is the fact that Victor Vasileoiu took over the idea of publishing this book; his PhD thesis defended in Köln before World War I being entitled *List's Influence on Romanian Economic Ideas in the 19th Century*.⁶⁴ Undoubtedly, Vasileoiu was among the best-known interwar national-liberal economists. Other writings by antebellum Romanian economists were re-published in the 1950s. Excerpts from Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu's oeuvre had already appeared in 1953. A complete edition of his oeuvre followed in 1983,⁶⁵ while Ion Ghica had been honored with such a complete edition from as early as 1956.⁶⁶ Alexandru Xenopol⁶⁷ and Petre Aurelian⁶⁸ followed in 1967, and in the 1970s and the 1980s Ștefan Zeletin became the main subject of several studies.⁶⁹

Additionally, Mihail Manoilescu's ideas again became core issues of interest some twenty years after his death.⁷⁰ In March 1969, the Committee for Culture and Arts announced the publication of a comprehensive study on the life and work of this interwar intellectual. Even if this had never happened, Manoilescu was included in university curricula.⁷¹ Moreover, in 1970 the economist Vasile Nechita from Iași wrote the first PhD thesis on Manoilescu's thought, his study representing the beginning of the official re-inclusion of Manoilescu in the canon of Romanian economists. This decision was also made possible by the fact that the *dependenția* from Latin America reimported to Romania its theories on dependence and planning through the "group of 77." In 1979, Manoilescu's name appeared in a presentation by Gheorghe Dolgu held at a UN Conference.⁷²

⁶⁴ Wendler, *List-Rezeption*, 453.

⁶⁵ Hașdeu, *Pagini alese; Opere*.

⁶⁶ Ghica, *Opere*.

⁶⁷ Xenopol, *Opere economice*.

⁶⁸ Aurelian, *Opere economice*.

⁶⁹ Sălăjan, Ștefan Zeletin, 1971; Năstasă, *Istoria socială în polemică*; Michelson, "Procesul dezvoltării naționale române."

⁷⁰ Schmitter, "Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu," 121.

⁷¹ Natalia Manoilescu-Dinu, *Schița sentimentală*, 6.

⁷² Love, *Crafting the Third World*, 277.

Other significant events happened in 1986, following the translation into Romanian of the book *National Productive Forces*,⁷³ and in 1989, following the detailed presentation of Manoilescu's ideas in Costin Murgescu's seminal work *Mersul ideilor economice la români* (The course of Romanian economic ideas).⁷⁴

Scissions and a New Beginning

A new moment of change, whose dimension and duration cannot yet be estimated, started in the early 1980s and culminated with the interruption of the spiral of radicalized state interventionism in 1989/1990. Nicolae Ceaușescu's economic policy consisted in constraining slogan-producing Western exports and restricting imports at all costs. This resulted in the deterioration of production installations from all industrial branches outside the export sector and in ever higher production damages. Disturbing the duration of the economic process caused a crisis of consumption, which in 1986 became a crisis of the system. The real reason for this was that the bond business, which was based on the valorification of differences between the Russian low-cost petrol prices and domestic high petrol prices, lost its central role as producer of slogans when petrol prices on the global market decreased again. In addition, the CAER market lost its previous role of a sale location for goods that were not competitive on the global market. This happened starting in 1986 when the Soviet Union promoted a relaxation of foreign trade relations and Soviet companies were allowed to choose between imports from the West and from CAER states.⁷⁵

The above-discussed events once again prove the correlation between an authoritarian state-controlled economy and dictatorial regimes. The increase of state interventionism in the case of Romania represented a reaction to slow industrialization which was perceived in practice as a failure of Western modernization. Constrained to proclaim and prove the success of the country's development, power-holding representatives could not rely on the free ratio between forces in economy and politics. Political authoritarianism was accompanied by economic authoritarianism and the abandonment of democracy and capitalism as directions of mod-

⁷³ Manoilescu, *Forțele naționale productive și comerțul exterior*.

⁷⁴ Murgescu, *Mersul ideilor*, 273–310.

⁷⁵ Roesler, "Jedes Mal existenzgefährdend?," 169 sq.

ernization; as such, Romania ended by accepting ascendant economic figures as unique indicators of progress. Yet, once the Soviet-type planned economy collapsed, it not only led to the disappearance of the political system but also to a reconceptualization of *progress*, its linear representation being replaced by the idea of change.

This new vision not only represents a temporally marked passage from planned economy to a capitalist-type market economy, but it also refers to the state's role and intervention. Even if using the idea of change is too recent to be able and carry out historical-linguistic investigations, there exists the possibility for a rupture with previous paradigms of progress and for the definition of development goals from the point of view of another paradigm.

This further shows how despite reductions and theoretical exaggerations Romania could not eventually subtract itself from capitalist changes. *Progress* first of all means a social change that can hardly ever avoid resistance. This concept therefore implies leaving behind traditional forms of co-habitation and, implicitly, losing previous certitudes. Progress brings along the massification of society, a more dynamic lifestyle, the enormous acceleration of political and economic changes, urbanization, and institutional differentiation. This list of modernization processes that perturb traditional lifestyles could go on. Progress additionally means a constraint to economic development by the elimination of any obstacle that could hinder or delay it.

We must find answers to these new political and economic challenges. So far any attempt to go beyond the natural pace of these processes of transformation by trying to force progress has proved fatal. This study has shown that such numerous attempts seldom relied on economic realities. Most often they were reasoned constructions, their theoretical radicalism and practical failure representing a warning for any future theory that would be forged on the basis of similar models.

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The Concept of *Property* in Romania's Economic-Legal History

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Historiography and Historical Topics

The concept and institution of *property* belong to the vocabulary and basic inventory of modern societies. Starting with the American and French revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century, the right to property and the state's guarantee of its inviolability fell under the broader scope of human rights. This happened after the idea of property rights had already played a central role in the thought of English or Scottish philosophers and economists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Adam Smith, or in the thought of Immanuel Kant.¹ The promise of universal and formally non-discriminatory property rights consists in creating the basis for a society of owners (possessors of goods) in which the right to act and dispose of central societal resources should be uncoupled from traditional determinants like state, family, regional or national origins, religion, ethnicity, etc. From an economic perspective, such a regime of property ensures the effective allocation of goods and enterprising rights while the goal of its political agenda is the creation and consolidation of a society of citizens who are active and self-conscious.²

The importance that the concept of *property* has for nineteenth- and twentieth-century modern societies is in inverse proportion to the number

¹ On the conceptual history of property in the German linguistic space, see Schwab, "Eigentum," 65–116. See also Macpherson, *Die politische Theorie des Besitzindividualismus*; especially for Locke, see Brocker, *Arbeit und Eigentum*; Trapp, *Adam Smith*.

² See Rittstieg, *Eigentum als Verfassungsproblem*; Dichmann and Feld, *Gesellschaftliche und ökonomische Funktionen des Privateigentums*; Siegrist and Sugarman, "Geschichte als historisch-vergleichende Eigentumswissenschaft," 9–30; Siegrist, "Die Propertisierung von Gesellschaft und Kultur," 9–52.

of historical studies on law, philosophy and politics that have been carried out in Romania in this respect. Many books of agrarian history or agrarian sociology make reference to the issue of (landed) property/real estate³ and, more recently, a lot of legal studies have been published on the issue of real property as well as industrial and intellectual property.⁴ The reasons for the absence of conceptual history studies, in general, and of property studies, in particular, are due to political circumstances that have not permitted or have considered untimely the disinterested investigation of a problematic area having a high political stake. On the other hand, “German” conceptual history and the works of Romance scholars and linguists from Leipzig, which were published in the 1970s and 1980s, were only picked up by a handful of Romanian historians. The same thing happened with “English” intellectual history. As a consequence, the process of assimilating these ideas within the methodological stock of Romanian historiography was very slow.⁵

Alongside the above-mentioned arguments regarding methodology and political untimeliness, we should also remember a category of reasons closely tied to the absence of studies on property from the perspective of conceptual history. The origins of these reasons lie in nothing else than the real history of property. In modern Romania, the concept of *property* was perceived as a liberal concept only in exceptional cases; as a consequence, it was insufficiently protected by political and legal institutions in the face of state and other types of influences. In its present-day meaning,

³ See Șandru, *Reforma agrară*; Mungiu-Pippidi and Althabe, *Secera și buldozerul*; Oțiman, *Agricultura României*; Bădescu, Ghinoiu, and Buruiană, *Sociologia și etnografia comunităților țărănești*; Bădescu and Buruiană, *Țăranii și noua Europă*.

⁴ See Adam, *Proprietatea publică și privată asupra imobilelor*; Bodoașcă, *Dreptul proprietății intelectuale*; Dănilă, *Dreptul de autor și dreptul de proprietate industrial*. See also a study on interwar market protection, Popescu, *Regimul internațional al proprietății industriale*.

⁵ As an example of the reception of Reinhart Koselleck’s conceptual history in Romania, see Alexandrescu, “Les malaises de la modernisation roumaine,” 867–883. Reinhart Koselleck and Klaus Bochmann’s conceptual history works (especially in relation to the Romanian language socio-political vocabulary) were directly used by Antohi, “Cuvintele și lumea,” 153–96; Carp, Stanomir, and Vlad, *De la “pravilă” la “constituție”*; Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune? Despre identitățile politice europene*; Stanomir, *Nașterea Constituției*; Barbu, *Politica pentru barbari*. See also the first Romanian-language publication of a text by Reinhart Koselleck: the article entitled “Geschichte” from the lexicon *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, published in Romanian as a book entitled *Conceptul de istorie* [The concept of history], translated by Victor Neumann and Patrick Lavrits, introductory study by Victor Neumann.

as well as in the heuristical use of the category of property after the rehabilitation of the liberal-individualist meaning of the concept of *property*, a purely normative approach seems to take center stage and this is rightly so. Especially the concept and practice of *property* as they were used in socialism are considered to form a category apart, which is spatially and temporally detached from Romania. This non-historical presupposition suggests that socialist property does not have its intellectual or social roots within the history of Romania. On the other hand, its influences on the present-day meaning of the concept are insignificant.

One can reflect on the liberal meaning of property only when one simultaneously analyzes institutions and concepts from the legal and political system areas. The concept of *justice* and its implications in the legal system have a significant influence on the horizon of expectations regarding formal legal equality and legal and expected certainties. At the same time, the promise deriving from the liberal-individualist concept of *property* as to the equally justified participation to the political nation and civil society is directly tied to the idea and practice of democracy. There are some preliminary works of conceptual history on the Romanian-language cognate concepts of *dreptate* (*justice*) and *democrație* (*democracy*) by Daniel Barbu and Wim van Meurs.⁶ For instance, in his collection of studies and documents regarding a “Romanian constitutional archeology,”⁷ the Bucharest-based historian and political analyst Daniel Barbu deals among other things with the concept and practice of *justice*. This concept does not seem to have resulted from a set of written or unwritten norms from within political practice prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century. It looks more like a hallmark of the rulers: “The ruler never speaks of law in general or impersonally. The royal jurisdiction is always private and personal.”⁸ Even in serious cases, such as the abuse of power and corruption, judgment would not have been passed in keeping with abstract legal norms but following the general usage and connotations of the Christian idea of forgiveness. This state of facts generally characterized the relation between a master and his subject. From the point of view of society, the expectations about good governing exclusively presupposed keeping “quiet” without taking engagements or promoting political participation.

In the Romanian state and society in which the economic basis was represented by agriculture and its derivatives—and so it continued to be

⁶ See Wim van Meurs's study from this volume.

⁷ See Barbu, *O arheologie constituțională românească*.

⁸ Barbu, “Iertarea și dreptatea sau despre economia socială a darului,” 57.

even in the twentieth century—the most important form of property consisted in real estate. Great landowners and real estate did not only dominate the sphere of economic reproduction but they also represented the basis of political power. Moreover, even in the interwar period, the elites' image of a better and decent life standard used as points of reference the possession of estates and mansions. For peasants, too, great landownership was particularly important. This is why the considerations that follow use landed property as a point of departure. I will focus on the period ranging from the mid-eighteenth century, when serfdom was abolished in Moldavia and Wallachia, until the first decade of the twenty-first century, when agricultural collectivization resulted in *rückgängig gemacht*, a process that was accompanied by the devalorization of concrete property (or real estate). For reasons of space, in point of the period prior to 1918, I will only analyze the development of the concept of *property* in the Romanian Principalities and the Old Kingdom respectively; after this year I will consider in my analysis the entire territory of Romania.

My documentation for offering a comprehensive analysis of the concept of landed *property* from the perspective of conceptual and institutional history is diverse and includes the following elements, without claiming to be exhaustive: texts from the legislative field, such as constitutions and special laws; texts from the area of economic doctrines and economic policies; sources from jurisprudence and judiciary and extra-judiciary cases; sources from those professions that are related to great landownership, such as geodesists, cadaster survey clerks, notaries and lawyers; and, finally, personal documents from both boyars and peasants which can show the cultural connotations of property. The present analysis follows these goals only in point of its approach. Given limitations of time and space, I have decided to individually point to the variety of sources that help support my argumentation. Meanwhile, the investigation focuses on numerous case studies based upon sources from easily accessible areas such as constitutions and agrarian reform laws, as well as adjacent debates.

Throughout the history of the changed meaning of *property* in Romania, one can identify three moments that have been publically debated and have implicitly offered a comprehensive view of the legitimate regime of property. These moments are: the 1848 Revolution, the period between the announcement of the 1917 agrarian reform and the adoption of the 1923 Constitution, and the period after the 1989 Revolution. One could argue against this periodization of the history of property in Romania because it fails to consider Alexandru Ioan Cuza's agrarian reform from

1864 as well as the mass collectivization and the nationalization of private property starting with the mid-1940s. Such objections are justifiable at the level of socio-political history because the above-mentioned processes and events determined significant modifications in the structure of property. Yet, a combination of socio-political history and the conceptual historical approach⁹ lead to the idea that the low impact of Cuza's reforms and the collectivization and nationalization of property from the socialist era imply terms and concepts specific to property which have broader connotations.

Property as a Resource Disputed between the State and Boyars (1746–1847). The Concept of *Forgiveness* in Constantin Mavrocordat's Socio-Political Language

The concept of *property* seems to have been first used in Romanian by the Romanian Enlightenment representative from Ardeal, Ioan-Budai Deleanu. In his poem *Țiganiada (Gypsyiad)*, written around 1800 but only made public around 1875–1877, he characterized the notion of *property* as a neologism of Italian origin. According to the basic ideas of the Ardeal School, which postulated the direct ancestry of Romanians, in general, and of Romanians from Ardeal, in particular, from a cultural symbiosis between the Dacians and the Romans, Budai-Deleanu pleaded in favor of the notion of “proprietary” (“property”) and against the borrowed meanings of “însușime” and “alsăuire” (Romanian variants for “making something one's own” and for “appropriating something to one's self”).¹⁰ Until the revolution of 1848, the concept of *property* in Wallachia and Moldavia seems not to have been used or not to have been known as an abstract label for a legal institution. The concept did not appear to have this meaning either in the case of Tudor Vladimirescu's revolution from 1821 or in the regulations regarding the relations between boyars and their peasant subjects, on the one hand, and their relations with the state, on the other; ideas that were stipulated in the Organic Regulations of Wallachia in 1831 and of Moldavia in 1832. Until the 1840s, the implications of the notion of *property* (which became a concept following the modernization of languages) seem to have been confined to the meaning of proprietor understood as a physical person.

⁹ See Koselleck, “Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte,” 107–29.

¹⁰ See Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*, 42.

The double implication of the concept of *property*, which, on the one hand, designates concrete persons, and on the other, great landowners, reflects the interdependence of socio-economic and political power from the eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Romanian Principalities until 1848 and even afterwards. From a formal point of view, peasants from Moldavia and Wallachia were no longer socmen after 1746–1749. But they did not get land and, consequently, they cultivated the lands of great boyars as tenants, so they remained *de facto* socmen. Apart from having to pay the rent—which they usually did in kind, an amount of 50 percent of their harvest—peasants also had to work for a number of days on the boyars' lands, they did all sorts of services to their benefit, and, not last, they bought important goods from them such as meat, wine and other goods needed for everyday life, or they ground the grains on their domains.

The motivation of ruler Constantin Mavrocordat for abolishing socmanship (on 5 August 1746 in Wallachia, known as the liberation of “rumâni”/Romanians,¹¹ and on 1 June 1749 in Moldavia, known as the abolishment of “vecinie”/neighborliness) was exclusively conditioned by the Christian view on morality:¹²

But, we all know in this community that having as subjects of slavery Christian followers of the same faith with us is not a Christian thing to do but something that is harmful to our souls [...]¹³

The way to solve this issue was considered to be the act of setting socmen free, without any obligations; in certain cases, when the boyar was not well meaning, one would proceed to buying back each person for 10 talers. Interestingly, setting socmen free and without obligations was interpreted through the concept of *forgiveness*: “As to Romanians without land, any one of you who will voluntarily wish to forgive them for your own remembrance [...]”¹⁴ Thus, the peasant was set free not because this was considered to be an attribute of his existence (as it was argued in Western Europe on the basis of natural law),¹⁵ but, more likely, because

¹¹ See Barbu, *O arheologie constituțională*, 131–4, 138–40.

¹² The moral-Christian type of reasoning was strengthened by the fact that high prelates of the Church countersigned princely documents in order to offer them greater legitimacy and authority.

¹³ It would be “an unchristian thing, and also very harmful to our souls,” “that faithful Christians be kept as slaves,” Ibid., 131.

¹⁴ Ibid., from the Wallachia document, 131f.

¹⁵ Vierhaus, *Eigentum und Verfassung. Zur Eigentumsdiskussion im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert*; Buckle, *Natural Law and the Theory of Property. Grotius to Hume*; Kleen-

this would have brought to the lord and the boyar mitigating circumstances on Doomsday. In this case, just as in the jurisdiction case described by Daniel Barbu, the concept of *forgiveness* was used in the sense of an arbitrary regulation of things without appeal to law, be it positive or natural law. While the regulation of relations between boyars and peasants was to change in the future, the treatment of peasants as simple objects remained a structural attribute of a particular type of politics throughout the nineteenth century.

Divided Property and Full Property. The Perspective of Organic Regulations

From a political and economic point of view, the Adrianopolis Treaty of Peace from 2 September 1829 inaugurated a new era for Moldavia and Wallachia. The suzerain rights of the Ottoman Empire as well as the presence of its troops were significantly reduced and rulers were to be elected for life, while the domestic affairs of the principalities would be autonomously regulated only on the basis of their collaboration with the Boyars' Divan. Openness on the international market under the form of a completely free trade and navigation of the Danube increased Romanians' chances to sell cereals to Western Europe. On the other hand, peasants' living conditions worsened. The increased demand for cereal-based products could not be satisfied by making agricultural production more efficient, but, given the lack of sufficient toilers, this could be achieved by increasing the peasants' burden. A legal stipulation on these relations of power and production from the political and economic sphere was included in the Organic Regulations. They came in effect on 1 July 1831 in Wallachia, and on 1 January 1832 in Moldavia.¹⁶ To a certain degree, these texts—which were very similar to a constitution and appeared under Russia's aegis—could be interpreted as the beginning of the legally constituted state and the rule of law.¹⁷ Even so, legally constituted citizenship structures were shadowed by the boyars' privileges. As a

sang, *Das Konzept der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft bei Ernst Ferdinand Klein. Einstellungen zu Naturrecht, Eigentum, Staat und Gesetzgebung in Preußen 1780–1810*.

¹⁶ A large part of the Organic Regulations was published in *Rumänien 1815–1847*, processed by Müller, Stanomir, and Murgescu.

¹⁷ For an analysis of the Organic Regulations, see Müller, Stanomir, and Murgescu, "Die rumänischen Fürstentümer 1815–1847".

consequence, personal rights and freedoms, the inviolability of one's dwelling and person, or freedom of movement and the protection of property were applied to peasants only to a very small degree.¹⁸

The passages from the Organic Regulations which referred to the relations between peasants and boyars were characterized by elaborated and detailed descriptions. One can deduce from them the importance of these relations for both countries. The category of *property* was never supported by abstract arguments. The authors of the Organic Regulations wanted to give the impression that relations of property and possession should not be motivated in any way, a thing that was implicitly so. They used the concept of *property* with the meaning of *proprietor* as long as this one designated the boyar.¹⁹ Peasants were most often called villagers, ploughers (as of yore), workers or simply inhabitants.²⁰ The concept of *property* used in correlation with the term *peasant* only became relevant in the context of possessive pronouns that described the peasant as property, the function of a good or, respectively, of a master, such as, for instance, formulations like "his villager," or "an inhabitant of his land."

According to the European perspective on law, the new regulation regarding agrarian relations stipulated that a third of the boyars' land would be recognized as their exclusive property, while the part belonging to peasants that worked on it was to be established from the remaining two-thirds on the basis of common law. For the legal assignation of land to peasants, boyars could use their work records, which had to be an amount of 56 days in Wallachia and 84 days in Moldavia. In the case of freely negotiated contracts, a further clause appeared on the leasing of new lands, one that determined a new and efficient way of binding peasants to the soil. During a year, only two families of peasants could leave behind a certain location. They had to announce their intention to leave six months in advance and the equivalent value of their due work had to be paid to the boyars in advance for a whole year; meanwhile, the payment of taxes to the state was to be acquitted before a new collection of taxes would start. At the same time, they had to leave to the boyar the house and yard in which they had lived.

¹⁸ On the agrarian constitution, see Maier, *Rumänien auf dem Weg zur Unabhängigkeitserklärung 1866*, 85–97; Welz, *Nationalkapitalismus vs Weltmarktintegration?*

¹⁹ In Art. 130 from the Organic Regulations of Moldavia, the concept of property was used only once to concretely refer to agrarian property.

²⁰ This is how section 7 from both Regulations looks like.

Everywhere in the text one and the same formulation is repeated over and over again, namely “following old customs.”²¹ This expression was meant to show how the regulations represented old customs of the land in point of the relations between peasants and boyars. Yet, none of the passages in the document mentioned any peasant right as to land ownership. Within the regulations regarding relations of property and use of land, the peasants remained simple objects of the compromise between the state and boyars. That peasants were given land to use was therefore considered a unilateral gesture and represented a desire for the patriarchal cohabitation of boyars and peasants.

Neo-Feudal Property in Liberal Clothes (1848–1917)

Dividing the meaning of the concept of *great landownership* in a category involving full rights of usage, on the one hand, and a category implying co-ownership and limited rights, on the other, was perpetuated after 1848 and even after 1864/1866. The 1848 generation perceived the peasants as a politically irrelevant category, while Alexandru Ioan Cuza could only see a basic level of interest in point of peasants. In the best of cases, they were the object of well-meant reforms, without becoming a subject of history.²²

Yet, the Commission for Agrarian Reform (The Property Commission), which was established during the 1848 revolution, introduced for the first time the concept of *property*, a concept designating not only the property of great boyars but also peasants' aspirations. To the degree to which they promoted the idea of the so-called “small properties” and “peasant properties,” the most radical of the 1848 revolutionaries, Nicolae Bălcescu and Ion Ionescu de la Brad, managed to enrich the semantic field of the concept of *property* in the long run. In the political thought of Nicolae Bălcescu, the issues of peasants and property were considered from a romantic paradigm: he considered that progress could only be achieved by a return to good old times, to their just and democratic ways.²³ The democratization of the property's structure would only imply the reintroduc-

²¹ Cf. Art. 130 (Moldavia); Art. 141 (Wallachia). Art. 119 RO on Moldavia implicitly showed that the reason for needing to regulate relations between the landowner and peasants had to be correlated with the circumstances in which the size of the land left to the peasant's usage or the counter-payment under the form of socmen days were not to be regulated following the old customs of the place.

²² See Lange, *Versuch über südosteuropäische Politik*; on Nicolae Bălcescu, 94–104.

²³ See Bălcescu, “Despre starea soțială a muncitorilor plugari,” 153–62; “Despre împroprietărea țăranilor,” 21–32.

tion of small peasant properties and the abolishment of forced labor. The peasants' representatives could not participate in political debates on the first possible occasion that soon came, namely the proceedings of the Property Commission initiated by Bălcescu; the chance to repeat this kind of political participation would not return in a long time. At the same time, with that occasion, the right to universal suffrage had been established. In the most important documents of the 1848 revolution from the principalities, the small peasant property was directly or indirectly promoted and had to acquire the same legal statute as that of great landownership. Article 13 of *The Islaz Proclamation* from 9 June 1848 promoted the following ideas: "The emancipation of socmen who become owners by reimbursement."²⁴ Meanwhile, Article 5 from the program of the National Party of Moldavia which was presented by Mihail Kogălniceanu in August 1848 proclaimed the following ideas in the name of humanity, justice and even great boyars' interest: "Villagers should be made proprietors after offering a just reimbursement to the previous land owners."²⁵ None of these ideas became reality because of the fierce opposition of great boyars from the Property Commission; this was the case not only because the revolution was defeated on the military field, but also because property and peasants' participation to the political process did not enjoy the support of revolutionaries since a majority of them had aristocratic origins.²⁶

Similar attempts to Bălcescu's intention to grant peasants lands in order to better integrate them in the political system were carried out in 1864 by Alexandru Ioan Cuza and prime minister Mihail Kogălniceanu.²⁷ Once enforced, the law of agrarian reform stipulated the definitive abolishment of socmanship and declared peasants as being "owners with full

²⁴ Art. 13 "The Proclamation of the Revolution from Wallachia in the Name of the Romanian People" (in short, *The Islaz Proclamation*), cf. Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 195–200, particularly 198.

²⁵ Art. V from the Wishes of the National Party of Moldavia: "We should abolish socmanship and distribute land to all peasants while the previous landowners should get an equitable reimbursement"; cf. Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 178–86, particularly 184.

²⁶ For a historical account of the events of the 1848 revolution in relation to the rapport between boyars and peasants, see Stan, *Revoluția de la 1848 în Țara Românească*.

²⁷ On the personal and ideological continuity of 1848 revolutionaries and the Alexandru Ioan Cuza government, see Zăne, "La loi rurale de 1864 et l'héritage idéologique en 1848," 213–225; Giurescu, *Viața și opera lui Cuza Vodă*. On Mihail Kogălniceanu, see his intervention in favor of the creation of peasant property in Kogălniceanu, *Scrieri literare, istorice, politice*, 212–21, 260–80.

rights” of the land they worked. The size of the land they were allotted varied depending upon the region and the number of animals one held. Overall, one could sustain that the part of the land that was legally reverted to peasants was measured as strictly as possible, so that they once again had to become workers on boyars' lands in order to be able and pay their “liberation” from them. What followed was an accumulation of new debts and their mortgaging the land they had just gained. After Cuza's removal from power in 1866, these relations in point of property and work were legalized by both chambers of the parliament, which were dominated by boyars.

The content of these regulations was stipulated in the “Law on engaging agricultural work and executing it.” This law, which was promulgated prior to the constitution, gave peasants a specific right apart from their already valid general contractual right: the complaint about a peasant's breach of contract had to be immediately verified, then a decision was taken and put into practice; in contrast, if a peasant came with any wish before the court, he was not taken into consideration. If the peasant did not show up for work, the boyar had the entire communal administration on his side, as well as the regional army; in contrast, the peasant could not even benefit from the equal rights he had just gained through the constitution and which should have placed him on a par with all owners and citizens.²⁸ After special laws wanted citizens' rights to be placed outside the scope of constitutional applicability, full property rights were highlighted in a liberal way in Art. 19 of the 1866 Constitution: “All kinds of property and the state's claims are sacred and inviolable.”²⁹ Meddling with property rights could only happen for “public utility causes” after this necessity was legally established, and the dispossessed person was reimbursed in accordance with the law. Public cause goals were reduced to those cases which served the development of infrastructure, the improvement of the sanitary system, and the country's defense.

²⁸ These kinds of relations have been dubbed “neo-feudal” in Romanian Marxist historiography as well as in Western European historiography. See Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Neoio-băgia*. See Maier, *Rumänien auf dem Weg zur Unabhängigkeitserklärung 1866–1877*.

²⁹ Art. 19 of the Constitution from 1 July 1866 in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 416.

Liberal-Individualist Property under the Influence of Collectivist Conceptions (1917–1989). Landed Property in the 1923 Constitution

The concepts of *property* and *political participation* in the Old Kingdom were no longer sustainable from the perspective of interwar Romanian elites. The latter saw Romania as lagging far behind Western Europe in point of development, ethnic homogeneity of the population, and economic capacity. To their mind, a step towards modernization was to occur thanks to a plan supervised by politicians and intellectuals who, in a first stage, would use protectionist and national-liberal means, and then technocrat-corporatist elements. Meanwhile, the elites' faith in their ability to put into practice a regime of property of classical liberal-individualist origin, within which the land would also become a competitive market good, was very limited. Therefore they followed the tendencies of the 1920s.³⁰

At the beginning of 1917, when the government and both parliament chambers met in Iași because of the war, prime minister Ion I.C. Brătianu prepared an amendment to the Constitution which specified a change in point of voting rights and agrarian reforms. On 20 July 1917, "The Law regarding the revision of the Constitution" was published in the *Official Gazette*. The law stipulated the "expropriation for the national use" of approximately two million hectares.³¹ Under the circumstances, interwar agrarian reforms would no longer be based on strictly economic reasons, but they would be mainly geared by political and social goals. The 1923 Constitution formulated the regime of property in Greater Romania by apparently taking into consideration the old universalist-equalitarian principles. Article 7 held that "All kinds of property as well as the State's claims [are] guaranteed" and expropriations could be done as of yore by reimbursements in cases of public utility. This latter aspect had to be established by the law and justice.³² We should problematize here not only the diminution of the property's status, which now became "guaranteed" in comparison to the 1866 Constitution when it was deemed "sacred and inviolable," but also the extension of the content and basis of expropriation expressed through the terms of "public utility." Alongside the three categories present in the 1866 Constitution new cultural factors emerged

³⁰ Mazower, *Der dunkle Kontinent. Europa im 20. Jahrhundert*, 26, 157–205.

³¹ Foceșeanu, *Istoria constituțională a Românie*, 55; Agrigoroaiei, "Problema reformelor agrară și electorală din România între anii 1916 și 1918," 179–94.

³² Art. 17 of the Constitution from 29 March 1923, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 559–74.

as well as “general interests regarding the state” or its administrative-territorial units. The new constitution also made reference to “other cases of public utility” that necessitated the approval of three-fourths of the parliament in order to become law.³³

Started through the project of the Constitution, the debate about the manner and level of state interventionism in the economic development of the country reached such a high level of abstractization and quality that it had echoes even in the realm of 1970s theories of dependence. In this sense, we should first of all name Mihail Manoilescu, and then Ștefan Zeletin, both of whom wrote on the margin of the same issues.³⁴ They both started from the premise of Romania's lagging behind in point of modernization in comparison with Western Europe; they considered this a deficit that could not be overcome through “laissez-faire” liberal methods. According to the two intellectuals, not only a definition of the state regarding its development goals was necessary, but also the state's intervention in the actions of economic agents which could go as far as becoming dirigisme. In comparison to the programmatic texts of the 1920s National Liberal Party members, this theory of development, enunciated in the context of Romanian interwar liberalism, stipulated several methods of the state's intervention as to citizens' property rights.³⁵ Two first-rate politicians of the National Liberal Party, Ion G. Duca and Vintilă I. Brătianu, pleaded in favor of conserving the principle of private property (to which the idea of social function had been added).³⁶ They did so on the occasion of the presentations organized by the Romanian Social Institute on the margin of the Constitution and the new political spectrum. The system foregrounded by non-liberal party members Manoilescu and Zeletin of-

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 560.

³⁴ See Manoilescu, “Neoliberalismul,” 198–228; “Politica economică de stat și constituția,” 240–77; Zeletin, *Burghezia română; Neoliberalismul*. On the reception of both, see Chirot, “Neo-Liberal and Social Democratic Theories of Development,” 31–52; Montias, “Notes on the Debate on Sheltered Industrialization: 1860–1906,” 53–71; Schmitter, “Reflections on Mihail Manoilescu and the Political Consequences of Delayed-Dependent Development on the Periphery of Western Europe,” 117–39. See also Love, *Theorizing Underdevelopment in Romania and Brazil*.

³⁵ In a text regarding Constitutional debates, Ștefan Zeletin exposed the Marxist political idea according to which, as a representative of the power-holding bourgeoisie, the National Liberal Party had the obligation to impose on “the chaotic mass of peasants” a constitution in which the principle of state interventionism would be anchored; see Zeletin, “Forță și constituție,” 142–9.

³⁶ See Brătianu, “Nevoile statului și constituția României Mari,” 54–73; Duca, “Doctrina liberală,” 144–54.

ferred a more accurate and honest national-liberal type of description regarding economic politics and the regime of property: they sustained the politics that had come to be known under the slogan “By ourselves/On our own!” What needed to be done involved “the development of the national wealth first of all through initiative as well as through Romanian workers and Romanian capital.”³⁷ As a consequence, the above-mentioned politics had to reach such a goal by focusing on the industrial sector.

It is within this discursive field that one could circumscribe the initial intention of the liberals to simply formulate Article 17 of the Constitution regarding the notion of *property*: “All kinds of property are guaranteed, and its exercise will be regulated through laws.”³⁸ From the very time of the formation of parliamentary committees regarding the elaboration of the Constitutional project, the above-mentioned proposal met with fierce resistance on the part of other National Liberal Party members.

Constantin C. Dissescu and Istrate Micescu, who were among the liberal leaders, delimited themselves from such a diluted guarantee of property and from the way it referred to some simple laws in the attempt to define the concept of *property*. They were careful not to lose the stability and security of the proprietors’ rights and the invested capital. Their fear was especially fostered by the nationalization of underground riches and the threat of the second agrarian reform.³⁹

During the final debates within the two chambers of the parliament, the critics of the dilution of the liberal meaning of property through the insertion of the previously mentioned elements declared themselves to be content. With the exception of a handful of parliament members, there was unanimity⁴⁰ regarding the way in which the constitutional protection of

³⁷ See *Historique du Parti Nationale Liberale*, 27.

³⁸ See *Raportul și cuvântările D-lui N.D. Chirculescu asupra proiectului de constituțiune în Adunarea Deputaților*, 16.

³⁹ See Dissescu, in Lascarov-Moldoveanu and Ionescu, *Constituția României din 1923*, 95. Renowned jurist Istrate Micescu stepped down from his position as observer of parliamentary consultations in view of changing the Constitution and as a form of protest against the new regulations regarding property. His well-founded explanation was not taken over by A. Lascarov-Moldoveanu and Sergiu D. Ionescu in the official publication of parliamentary consultations, on the unlikely claim that Micescu had not sent his declaration. See Păun, *Sistemul politic al României în secolul XX*, 96.

⁴⁰ Ion Grădișteanu, one of the few members of the Conservative-Democratic Party who remained in the parliament declared himself to be against the role of the social function of property based on considerations of essence. What should happen if an owner did not conform to such a position? Who should establish this and how should sanctions be applied? he wondered. See Lascarov-Moldoveanu and Ionescu, *Constituția României*, 111.

property could be guaranteed. In this sense, let us quote one of prime minister Ion C. Brătianu's declarations:

If you wish that our society be placed on the solid foundation of private property, this principle should not on any account be stipulated in the Constitution, and be in contradiction with the interests of social development. More likely, voters who today represent and have control over the state should be convinced that respecting property is in everyone's best interest; they should learn that the society cannot be developed on other bases than the one just mentioned, and that property, as it is divided in our state, should be put to everyone's use.⁴¹

Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Dirigisme

The fears of liberal politicians regarding a weakness of the liberal, universalist-equalitarian concept of *property* as stipulated in the Constitution showed the level of Romanian domestic politics and, respectively, the results of the agrarian reform. Members of the National Liberal Party feared that there might be a transfer of governmental responsibility towards the National Peasant Party,⁴² something that actually happened in the fall of 1928. At the same time, they also feared that there might be a second agrarian reform with new interventions on the issue of property, something that did not actually happen.

Within the debates regarding the Constitution, the proposals put forth by the Peasant Party in its constitutional project were harshly criticized by parliament member Justin Stănescu.⁴³ He considered that these proposals marked the beginning of a process that would inevitably lead to the nationalization of all Soviet-type lands, his argument being the idea of "work property" belonging to peasant party members.⁴⁴ Alongside many agrarian thinkers and peasant parties of the times, the theoretician of the Peasant Party, Constantin Stere, believed it was legitimate to only possess the amount of land one could work with one's own hands. Justin Stănescu's argument was that Stere's model demanded an instance that would establish the size of land that needed to be allocated or taken back depending on how large a peasant family would be; this latter was an as-

⁴¹ Brătianu, in *Constituția României*, 111.

⁴² After long-lasting negotiations between the National Party from Ardeal and the Peasant Party from the Old Kingdom, the two parties merged in the fall of 1926 and constituted the National Peasant Party. See Müller, *Agrarpopulismus in Rumänien*, 92–6.

⁴³ See Stănescu, in *Constituția României*, 98–102.

⁴⁴ See Müller and Harre, "Transforming Rural Societies."

pect that could vary in time. In practice, Stere's view on property and, particularly, on landed property implied massive interventions in the liberal concept of *property*, and even its replacement with a term that was collective in nature.⁴⁵ In Article 27 from his Constitutional project, he defined land as "the main factor for the State's national life," so that:

[...] the circulation, distribution and use of landed property are under the State's control; this is so in order to prevent abuses and direct the country's evolution towards an agrarian structure based on work property [...]⁴⁶

Stere wanted that the rational use of land be stipulated as an obligation of the owner towards society, that land dealings resulting from the agrarian reform only be deployed among peasants, and that the surplus value of the land that was not obtained through work or invested capital be used to the benefit of the community (article 27.4).

The fierce attacks against Constantin Stere's and the Peasant Party's views which were coming from the side of national liberals like Justin Stănescu should not distract people's attention from the convergence points that existed between Stere's agrarian-populism and the National Liberal Party's agrarian dirigisme. These convergence points mainly consisted in motivating that the transfer of land from great landowners towards peasants was a national and respectively a social necessity. On another note, these common points consisted in the significant increase of the state's role in the allocation of life opportunities, especially since state actors and institutions were involved everywhere and they were the ones who established which group was to be expropriated, to what degree, or, reversely, which groups would be allotted land, how much, and what legal status this land had to hold in the future.

From a qualitative and temporal perspective, one can notice that during the interwar years the state changed its role from that of a concrete organizer of land redistribution to that of the creator of guided modernization. First of all, the essential regulations of the agrarian reform from the Old Kingdom of Romania were taken over under the form of Article 131 from the Constitution and, in this way, subsequent results also gained constitutional status.⁴⁷ If one were to divide interwar agrarian reform in three analytically disposed stages—land expropriation, allocation and administra-

⁴⁵ See Art. 26–28 from the Project of the Constitution of the Peasant Party, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 531.

⁴⁶ See Art. 27, 1, *Ibid.*, 531.

⁴⁷ The Peasant Party's Constitutional Project, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 573.

tion—one would notice the significant increase of the state's role in all three areas.⁴⁸ The central institutions empowered with undertaking agrarian reform, as well as the agencies under their subordination at the level of district and place, gave land or legalized its distribution according to a principle that was in fact well favored by the Peasant Party: each peasant had to get as much land as he could work with his own hands. Implicitly the legislator arrogated to himself the right to establish the necessary useful or legitimate quantity of the landed property allocated to an individual. Without taking into consideration previous performances, current capacities or the potential of peasants' future achievements, the latter were to possess a minimum surface of ploughed and grazing field that was likely to ensure them their daily existence. All previously obtained properties were placed under the spectrum of more or less open accusations that they had been obtained through exploitation and other illegitimate methods.

The same socio-political but hardly economic logic succeeded the expropriation and distribution of land, and also became valid in the case of the government's determination of the legal status of the land that was distributed in light of the agrarian reform. In the regulations of the agrarian reform, the state kept its right to co-decide in circumstances presupposing the selling, leasing, and inheritance of land, or the manner of working it. Article 120 from the law of agrarian reform in the Old Kingdom⁴⁹ stipulated that the land could be sold, changed or left as inheritance five years after definitive allotment of ownership over it; this latter allotment only had legal value after one paid to the state the entire reimbursement sum. Through Article 122, the state kept the right of preemption in case one bought all lands; this not only referred to the lands given with the occasion of the current agrarian reform but also to those of the previous reform.⁵⁰

During the above-mentioned period, only state or state-authorized institutions could lease land. A minimum of the land in the amount of one hectare, as well as the yard and house of the property, had to be completely protected from the effects of the financial market and inheritance-

⁴⁸ On the issue of an adequate legislation, including the decisions that had to be executed in the context of agrarian reform, see *Codul General al României*, vols. IX/X, 265–71 and 864–908; on the Old Kingdom, 653–732; on Transylvania, 733–803.

⁴⁹ Similar decisions can also be found in the laws of the agrarian reform from the new provinces—Ardeal, Bessarabia, Bukovina—regions that had even more restrictive tendencies than Dobrogea. For an analysis of agrarian reforms during the colonization of Dobrogea, see Müller, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*, 362–474.

⁵⁰ See Goruneanu, *Regimul circulațiunii pământurilor rurale*, 110.

related practices.⁵¹ Articles 137 and 139 from the 1921 agrarian reform stipulated that an institution such as the Central House of Land Distribution could prescribe what plants the peasants had to cultivate and how to process them. If they were incapable of carrying out these tasks and failed to fulfill the authorities' expectations, land could be taken away from them.⁵² One could say that the invoked regulations meant more than anything else a restriction of property rights. Thus, peasants' gains from working the land tended to zero, especially since lands did not represent a guarantee for getting bank credits. Because cooperatist banks or other forms of agrarian credit functioning in Romania could not keep pace with the capital amounts that were needed, peasants' family enterprises could only have access to banking capital that involved high risk interests and, consequently, they soon accumulated very high debts.⁵³

Agrarian dirigisme organically developed from the agrarian reform and measures that in a first stage were meant to consolidate its results. In 1925, a law was promulgated which extended those regulations according to which one could transfer land property five years after getting it.⁵⁴ The same law stipulated the right of preemption by which any piece of land was first of all offered to the Central House of Distribution, and not only those pieces of land that could be transferred to non-peasants.⁵⁵ A law promulgated by the National Peasant Party in 1929 represented an interruption of dirigiste tendencies that would otherwise develop freely.⁵⁶ In actual fact, the right to preemption proved to be seldom taken into consideration by the authorities; in spite of interdictions, dealings with land falling under the scope of agrarian reform existed, even if the reimbursement amount had not been completely paid and the stipulated five-year period had not passed yet. As a consequence, these two regulations, together with the stipulation about absolute protection over market risks, were abrogated.⁵⁷ In this way, the National Peasant Party hoped for an improvement of the agrarian crediting situation as well as for the possibility of leading peasants to legally increase the surface of land that they could cultivate. Once the Great Depression

⁵¹ Ibid., 75.

⁵² See Bulgaru, *Către o nouă reformă agrară?*, 12.

⁵³ According to Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, this phenomenon in the finance field was called "Balkan interests." See Pătrășcanu, *Probleme de bază ale României*, 111.

⁵⁴ The law regarding the transfer of property over lands received via the allocation from 13 March 1925 in *Codul General*, vols. XI/XII, 857.

⁵⁵ See Goruneanu, *Regimul circulațiunii pământurilor rurale*, 102, 113.

⁵⁶ See Potârcă and Oprescu, *Mica proprietate țărănească*.

⁵⁷ Potârcă and Oprescu, *Mica proprietate țărănească* 76, 103, 113.

came at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, and following the decrease of prices for agricultural products, such hopes were dissipated. Many governmental cabinets representing different political parties found themselves obliged to massively intervene in creditors' property rights between 1930 and 1934, so that peasants should not have to definitively renounce to the market mechanism; in this way they could pay both their taxes to the state and the accessed credits. Several laws on the conversion of debts were promulgated, a reason for which banks and state institutions had to give up a large part of their due payments.⁵⁸

Agrarian dirigisme intensely manifested itself in practice and as an ideological substratum from the mid-1930s onwards, starting with the liberal cabinet headed by Gheorghe Tătărescu. Thus, an agrarian law promulgated in 1937 stipulated the abolishment of each type of freedom of movement for small family enterprises.⁵⁹ A long-term and annual plan had to be thought up for the rationalization of the agrarian field (Article 13); the plans stipulated the existence of a chief of agricultural circumscription who could indicate to peasants what products to plant (Article 17).⁶⁰ This case was simply a return to and strengthening of the already-existing stipulations from 1921, and referred to the state's control of small agriculture, a control that had not actually happened. Even national-peasant party members that had until then been the champions of small and medium peasantry's free initiative and of free trade on a macro-economic level now turned towards state dirigisme under the leadership of their uncontroversial dogmatic leader Virgil Madgearu. They therefore proposed the reunification of small peasantry in collectivities within a peasant state, and this could happen even by the use of force if that was what the situation required.⁶¹

The governing National Liberal Party started preparations for creating a Romanian Institute of Agrarian Law, which was founded in December 1939.⁶² As can be derived from numerous publications, its orientation aimed at the consolidation of agrarian law as a special area of law; within this field the general regulations from the civil law and especially those concerning the transfer of property or inheritance of land were to be no

⁵⁸ On the effects of the global crisis upon the Romanian economy, see Müller, *Agrarpopulismus in Rumänien*, 130–40.

⁵⁹ See Angelescu, *Organizarea micii proprietăți țărănești*.

⁶⁰ Cf. Bulgaru, *Către o nouă reformă agrară?*, 6.

⁶¹ Cf. Madgearu, "Economia dirijată," 3–18; "Economia dirijată și Cooperăția," 129–36; Zane, "Țărănismul și organizarea statului Român," 15–38.

⁶² Cf. Rădulescu, *Dreptul și proprietatea rurală*, 3.

longer valid.⁶³ In a clearly anti-liberal way, the authors emphasized how much the Romanian Civil Code was based on the French Civil Code and, hence, it was not adequate for regulating Romanian practice in what regards landed property. According to them, the legislation of fascist Italy would have been much more adequate, as well as the Law regarding hereditary farms from the Reich (*Reichserbhofgesetz*) of National-Socialist Germany.⁶⁴

This view on agrarian law became a chapter of the new constitution that was promulgated in 1938 in the context of Charles I's dictatorship. Broadly speaking, the 1938 Constitution created a corporatist system which abolished not only peasants', parties' and the parliament's rights to individual property, but also the political meaning of the nation. This had been made possible by a generation of intellectuals and especially technocrats like Mihail Manoilescu who criticized parliamentary democracy and classified it as an inadequate solution to the problems of modernization.⁶⁵ Interventions in property rights as promoted by the Romanian Institute of Agrarian Law and later consolidated through the Constitution under the dictatorship of Charles I did not represent a significant qualitative abatement from the liberal-individualist concept of *property*. As I have already shown, the decisive rupture between the concept and practice of *property* in a liberal sense had already occurred during the agrarian reform of 1917.

The Nationalization of Natural Resources

Despite the strong opposition from the other parties, the liberal leadership around Ion C. Brătianu and the owners of the oil industry used the 1923 Constitution in order to impose the nationalization of all of Romania's natural resources.⁶⁶ This issue was considered to be a part of the project of

⁶³ Cf. Lazăr, *Autonomia dreptului agrar*; Iornescu, *Dreptul agrar în România*; Institutul Român de Drept Agrar; Vidra, *Noțiunea actuală a dreptului de proprietate*; Rădulescu, *Dreptul și proprietatea rurală*. For criticism on agrarian law as special law, see Leonardescu, *Câteva observațiuni asupra unor articole din Legea de Reformă Agrară pentru Basarabia*.

⁶⁴ On the national-socialist doctrine of property and agrarian law, see Stolleis, *Gemeinwohlformeln im nationalsozialistischen Recht*; Grundmann, *Agrarpolitik im Dritten Reich. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit des Reichserbhofgesetzes*.

⁶⁵ Cf. Manoilescu, *Rostul și destinul burgheziei românești*. For an in-depth assessment of this problematic, see Janos, "The One-Party State and Social Mobilization," 204–36.

⁶⁶ Cf. Murgescu, "Anything but Simple: the Case of the Romanian Oil Industry," 231–50; Pearton, *Oil and the Romanian State*, 1971; Gane, *Le régime minier Roumain et la nationalisation du sous-sol*.

economic politics “By ourselves!/On our own!” “With the help of legal provisions,” this project should have allowed “the transformation of foreign property into national property preferably falling in the hands of the national mainstream” by “making it ours.”⁶⁷ As pointed out in debates around the Constitution, Article 19⁶⁸ would in fact deal with around 3000 owners on whose land oil was found.⁶⁹ In the new provinces of Transylvania and Bukovina, the state was already the owner of natural resources since 1845, in keeping with the so-called “estate principle.” This latter principle had been introduced by agrarian reforms in Dobrogea in 1881 and in Bessarabia in 1921. Only about 3 percent of the total amount of oilfields was actually the property of physical persons, another percentage was jointly owned by individuals and the state, and the largest proportion was exclusively the state's property. On the occasion of state succession, all natural resources of the new provinces, particularly coal and different metal deposits, had already become the property of Romania. On this basis, regional parties like the National Party from Transylvania feared the considerable increase of the national-liberals' influence in their areas of interest and opposed the introduction of this principle in the Constitution.⁷⁰

The exploitation of oil sources in some districts throughout the Old Kingdom was of higher political and financial importance. A law that clarified property rights had already been elaborated by a conservative government in 1895 in order to promote oil exploitation and attract technological know-how and foreign investments. As a consequence, the natural resources corresponding to private properties could be either exploited under the frame of free initiative or as concessions made by the state for a period of 75 years. This right was the absolute attribute of the owner and the concessionaire respectively, and could be transferred or mortgaged. Such possibilities attracted a significant amount of capital. As a result, numerous companies involving mixed participation emerged, such as American-Romanian, Dutch-Romanian or German-Romanian companies, and the value of oil exports in the Old Kingdom started to directly compete with agrarian products for the first place.⁷¹ The leaders of the National Liberal Party wanted these resources to become the state's property or even to fall under their own control so that they might dominate the

⁶⁷ Teichova, *Kleinststaaten im Spannungsfeld der Großmächte*, 58.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 560.

⁶⁹ See Petrescu, in *Constituția României*, 146.

⁷⁰ Cf. Bitoleanu, *Din istoria României moderne*, 98.

⁷¹ Cf. Murgescu, “Anything but simple,” 233.

political field in the long run, following the accusations and fears of their political adversaries. Finance Minister Vintilă Brătianu highlighted the different qualitative function of property, in general, and of natural resource property such as oil, in particular. This had become obvious in the wake of the last war:

We currently have and will continue to have oil for sale, but this oil must remain in Romanian hands and since it represents a war weapon it has to be coordinated with state politics and selling it must only be done in accordance with our political interests.⁷²

His party fellow and friend, Member of Parliament Ghiță Petrescu, foregrounded this idea through a simpler formula: "Property has been and will be restricted as long as state interests ask for it."⁷³ Serious opposition to the plans of the National Liberal Party leaders was expressed especially within the circles of the oil industry but also inside the party as such. Important party members such as Alexandru Constantinescu, Istrate Mișescu, Constantin Halaceanu and others opposed the nationalization of natural resources. They criticized this intention as "an exaggerated form of state-control" and an "undermining of property rights,"⁷⁴ an inevitable tendency of deterioration characterizing Romania's investment climate. This group and the representatives of oil industry criticized this marked direction towards state interventionism in the economy and saw it as a gradual passage towards communism.⁷⁵

Strong opposition also came from the less well-organized circles of owners who had oilfields. An important representative of this group was the liberal Member of Parliament D.N Constantinescu-Bordeni from the Prahova district.⁷⁶ In his parliamentary speeches, he described the problematic situation of peasants, owning small pieces of land, who found that they could no longer use them for agrarian purposes after oil prospecting started and because of ecological reasons. Their only source of income remained concession-based payments made by oil companies. If the state were to enter in possession of natural resources without paying damages, this would undoubtedly imply the need for expropriations.⁷⁷ Following

⁷² Brătianu, in *Constituția României*, 158.

⁷³ Lascarov-Moldoveanu and Ionescu, *Constituția României*, 148.

⁷⁴ Cf. Halaceanu, *Naționalizarea subsolului*, 3, 7.

⁷⁵ Cf. Murgescu, "Anything but simple," 239.

⁷⁶ Cf. Constantinescu-Bordeni, in *Constituția României*, 152.

⁷⁷ The Prahova branch of the Peasant Party argued in similar terms. Cf. *Chestiunea subsolului petrolifer* [On the question of underground oilfields].

such criticism, as well as the diplomatic and economic pressure coming from countries whose companies were hit by nationalization, the national-liberal leaders had to make some concessions. Thus, company-earned rights, or more precisely, state concessions as to excavation and exploitation, were finally guaranteed by the Constitution and the Law of Mines from 1924. In contrast, owners who had not started exploitation or who had concessionated the exploitation lost the property to the state. Damages were obvious, as some economic-historical studies have shown, while the potential advantages of the state's control over oil exploitation were doubtful.⁷⁸ In the first part of the 1920s, oil prices were high and Romania was not able to export too much oil because of the lack of investments and legislative uncertainty. Towards the middle of the 1920s, the reduction of oil prices and the stabilization of prices at a low level helped increase the number of oil exports. A similar correlation with Romania exporting a lot when prices were low and exporting little when prices were high could be also applied to agricultural products, which represented the most important goods destined for exportation.⁷⁹

As we have shown, property-related norms as established through the Constitution, agrarian reforms, and the Law of Mines from 1924 marked the beginning of a transformation of the regime of property. The dirigisme that slowly but constantly continued at the economic level, in general, and in point of the agrarian and oil domain, in particular, represented an attempt to plunge towards modernization. It followed a plan and was under the coordination of politicians and intellectuals having in an initial stage a protectionist and national-liberal penchant and then a technocratic-authoritarian one. Once the concept of *property* was enriched with an attribute that represented a social function to the nation's service, a new element loomed out. Becoming aware of the army's problems—one that was mainly made up of peasants who were ill-equipped and almost not at all monitored during World War I—the Romanian elites suggested the extension of social modernization. The success of such efforts was very limited in the context of a liberal-individualist regime of property. Agricultural land and underground resources were totally or partially in the state's hands. The politics of agrarian dirigisme and economic nationalism visibly diminished the rights of owners from the 1920s onwards, and reached a climax during the 1930s and during the war economy of the 1940s.

⁷⁸ Cf. Murgescu, "Anything but simple," 241.

⁷⁹ Cf. Murgescu, "The Economic Performance of Interwar Romania," 55.

The Concept of *Socialist Property* (1945–1989)

Neo-liberal and agrarian-dirigiste doctrines and measures influenced the thought of the elites and peasants. The idea of property as a nationalist and collectivist issue thwarted the struggle of civic elites against the post-1945 communist collectivism. The expectations of (economic) agents were directed towards the central power, and this happened because the state had been the main interventionist power even at the level of property rights from the interwar years onwards.

Studies on post-1989 Romanian agrarian and property history are visibly more limited both in point of the space dedicated to this kind of analysis and in point of choice of topics. Studies dedicated to the 1949–1962 collectivization predominate and they particularly focus on analyzing constraints and repressions undertaken by the state and, not least, the resistance put up by peasants.⁸⁰ In comparison, the post-1962 functioning of the collectivist economy and the 1945 agrarian reform have been rarely thematized.⁸¹ Such interests are based on the thesis that the communist regime represented a complete break from the liberal-individualist concept of *property* and that the introduction of collectivist agriculture was predominantly oppressive in character. Yet, the socialist concept and praxis of property does not mark a total break from liberal-individualist property, as the literature of transition postulates. Marxist thought largely developed through critical dialogue, by rejecting the liberal concept of *property*, criticizing its unkept promise about political participation, and the development of its own concept of *property* standing for a more equitable institution.

The agrarian reforms from 1918 and 1945 are distinct in certain aspects, but they essentially share so many common points that the 1945 reform could be considered the logical continuation of the one from 1918. The difference between the two amounts to the speed with which the decisions and laws were taken and implemented. In the second half of the 1940s, consultations lasted for several weeks and it took several

⁸⁰ Dorin Dobrinu's contribution to a collection on Romanian communism is symptomatic in this sense; cf. Dobrinu, "Colectivizarea agriculturii și represiunea împotriva țărănimii din România (1949–1962)," 108–25. See also the special collection by Dobrinu and Iordachi, *Țărăimea și puterea*. See also the two series of documents regarding collectivization edited by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism and covering the period between 1949 and 1956.

⁸¹ Studies on this topic have mainly appeared within the field of Anglo-Saxon anthropology. Cf. Kideckel, *The Solitude of Collectivism*; Verdery, *Transylvanian Villagers*.

years to complete their implementation; in contrast, some provisions from the 1918 agrarian reform had not even been implemented after the end of World War II. Consultations for the second agrarian reform started in Romania on 16 December 1944 as part of a Commission for the Study of Agrarian Reform presided by peasant party member Ioan Hudiță.⁸² The commission never reached a common position, each of its component parties and institutions insisting on sustaining their own stand. From its very first meeting, the new government led by Petru Groza, the president of the Ploughmen Front, established as its main goal the quick implementation of agrarian reform. The law was proposed on 12 March 1945, it was debated and adopted during the meetings from 13, 19, and 20 March 1945 and, finally, it was enforced on 23 March 1945. At that moment, the agrarian reform was declared finalized.⁸³ The main reason for these quick actions was represented by the political determination that accompanied the 1945 agrarian reform, which led to the backgrounding of economic considerations. This was a situation that was once again largely similar to that of the 1918 reform. Economic considerations were almost completely suppressed by equalitarian-populist and ethno-political reasons.⁸⁴ Intervention in property rights did not represent something out of the ordinary. More likely, it represented a method that had already been tested starting in 1918 and through which one could gain or force a submissive political behavior on the entire country.

A single dimension of the 1945 agrarian reform is reflected in Romania when its motivations are identified with the attempts of the Romanian Communist Party and the Ploughmen Front to win political influence throughout the country. Given this, scholars generally disregard the fact that the new interventions in property rights were based on the broad consensus of almost all political parties. Within the debates regarding a new agrarian reform, interesting and unexpected arguments were brought up as to its implementation and the manner of organizing Romanian agriculture

⁸² The Commission comprised representatives from the following parties and institutions: the National Liberal Party, the National Peasant Party, representatives of the National Democratic Front in which communists were predominant; there was also one representative for each of the following organizations dominated by large landowners: the Central Union of Romania's Agricultural Trade Unions, the Academy of Agriculture from Romania, the Romanian Institute of Agronomic Research and the House of Forests.

⁸³ For further details see Șandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România*, 61–115.

⁸⁴ On the ethno-political dimension of interwar agrarian reforms, see Müller, "Landreformen, Property rights und ethnische Minderheiten," 207–34.

in the future. After the fall of the Antonescu regime on 23 August 1944, communists gave up those aspects of their government program they had previously sustained and which stipulated the organization of all peasants in *kolkhoz* (collective farms) after the Soviet model.⁸⁵ In 1945, this request mainly came from the great landowners who suggested the advantages of cultivating large areas of land on which agriculturists worked. They were hoping to therefore prevent a new expropriation and redistribution of land.⁸⁶ Even the National Liberal Party opposed the new expropriations in view of keeping intact for their Old Kingdom clientele as many surfaces over 100 hectares as possible. The National Peasant Party came up with a project of law that followed its view on peasant status as it had been ascribed at the end of the 1930s, and which stipulated that all peasants be organized in cooperatives after the implementation of land expropriation and redistribution.⁸⁷

Nothing came out of all these plans for an agrarian reform to be deployed according to the law, because in the fall of 1945 the Romanian Communist Party and the Ploughmen Front urged peasants to take over large surfaces of land or the properties of those considered to be traitors or guilty of Romania's participation in the war against the Soviet Union.⁸⁸ For most of the country, the agrarian reform decree-law from 23 March 1945 represented just the legalization of the savage expropriation that had already occurred.

The law stipulated four categories of properties that were to be expropriated: those of persons who had voluntarily participated in the war against the Soviet Union; those of people who had committed war crimes; those of people who had fled the country after 23 August 1944; and those of people who had collaborated with Hitler's Germany. The last category separately comprised Germans from Romania, while their collaboration

⁸⁵ In comparison to the 1920 reform, the Romanian Communist Party explicitly underlined that the promulgation of the 1945 agrarian reform law would create the conditions necessary for distributed lands to become a stable property of the owners. Cf. Tașcă *Reformele Agrare din 1920 și 1945*.

⁸⁶ Cf. the document emitted by the Central Union of Romania's Agricultural Trade Unions from 1945 entitled "Report before the Commission for Studying the Agrarian Reform." The Romanian Academy of Agriculture also pleaded in favor of keeping the large pieces of land that remained; see *The Agrarian Reforms*.

⁸⁷ See *Proiect de lege pentru Expropriere și Împroprietărire*. Cf. to the speech of an economy expert from the National Peasant Party, Gheorghe Tașcă, which he held on 22 February 1945 in front of the Association of Economists; Tașcă, *Reforma Agrară*.

⁸⁸ Cf. Bîțfoi, *Petru Groza, ultimul burghez*, 297.

was simply proved by the fact that they pertained to the German Ethnic Group. Irrespective of whether they were approved or not, or whether they were actually collaborators or adversaries of Nazi ideas, Germans' belonging to the German Ethnic Group was administratively established and promoted by the authorities in the post-1938 corporatist-run Romania. Moreover, all agricultural surfaces of over 50 hectares per person were expropriated in Romania, as well as the properties of absentees and leasers. Just as in the case of the first agrarian reform, the land could be preferentially distributed first to war combatants, their widows and orphans, and then to agriculturists and peasants who had no or very little land.⁸⁹

The results of the agrarian reform were resumed in January 1947 as follows: approximately 1.4 million hectares of land were expropriated from around 143,000 owners, of which only 11,600 were actually great landowners; of the expropriated amount, approximately only one million hectares was distributed to a similar number of persons.⁹⁰ One can recognize in these figures the populist and ethno-political orientation of the agrarian reform. Some 400,000 hectares that represented a significant part of the agricultural lands became the state's reserve while the percentage of distributed land was not too large, so that one cannot speak of a significant increase in the number of lands destined to peasants. Irrespective of the productivity of expropriated lands or the individual implication of the Germans in the Third Reich's wrongdoings, their land was completely and definitively expropriated without the payment of damages.

The Romanian Communist Party and the Ploughmen Front applied the agrarian reform by following the Soviet model: its goal was to extend and to consolidate their political foundation throughout the entire country. The above-mentioned parties simultaneously wanted to weaken the socio-political basis of historical parties and to increase the state's possibilities of intervention in view of preparing collectivization. Meanwhile, the German presence in Romania provided the ideal scapegoat they needed. At the same time, it is equally true that through this agrarian reform Communists found themselves in some of sort of competition with peasant party members in what regards collectivization, and with certain great landowners in what regard state farms. Such types of agricultural organizations were intensely implemented after 1949.

The Marxist philosophy of history had a profoundly teleological character, its core being represented by the theory of property. Thus, the his-

⁸⁹ Cf. Șandru, *Reforma agrară din 1945 în România*, 122.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

torical progress of mankind would be necessarily directed towards a state that had already been reached, that of a primordial classless society in which the private property of production means did not exist; on the contrary, all the forces of production represented a common property and were placed at the disposal of the entire society.⁹¹ From this conception there developed a construct of hierarchized categories of property, which included state property (the most important category), followed by collective property and private property. This latter category was perceived as merely residual. In what regards terminology, some differences existed in the socialist lager and they were visible both at the state and different temporal levels.

After the 1945 agrarian reform apparently strengthened private landed property in Romania, the 1948 Constitution introduced a differentiation of the concept of *property* on the basis of the Marxist triad of property.⁹² According to Articles 5 and 6, all production means became the state's property, be they natural resources, mines, forests or water sources, etc. Meanwhile, collective property as formulated in Article 7 was little concretized. In Article 8, private property was terminologically defined as a residual category that was in fact hard to conceptualize:

Private property and inheritance rights are recognized and guaranteed by law. The private property gained through work and savings is privileged by a special protection.⁹³

Called "private property," this category was strongly conditioned by each individual's amount of work and savings and its direction of development closely depended upon the other two categories.

In the 1952 Constitution, the property triad was clearly formulated (in Article 5) and it simultaneously foregrounded the inferior status that the gradually marginalized private property⁹⁴ had acquired following the col-

⁹¹ Cf. Küpper, *Einführung in die Rechtsgeschichte Osteuropas*, 420, 437.

⁹² For further details, see Leonhardt, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des persönlichen Eigentumsrechts in Rumänien*, 1974; Miler, "Drept și propagandă: posesia asupra terenurilor agricole, colectivizarea și proprietatea socialistă," 136–53.

⁹³ Art. 8: "Das Partikulareigentum und das Erbrecht sind vom Gesetz anerkannt und garantiert. Das durch Arbeit und Ersparnisse erworbene Partikulareigentum erfreut sich eines besonderen Schutzes." Cf. The Constitution from 14 April 1948, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 753–61, particularly 753.

⁹⁴ The Constitution from 27 September 1952, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 770–82.

lectivization of agriculture.⁹⁵ Article 6 first of all clarified that: "The foundation of the socialist socio-economic formation is represented by the socialist property of production means, which either takes the form of state property [...], or that of collectivist cooperatist property [...]"⁹⁶ In accordance with the idea of "work property" formulated by Constantin Stere in the 1920s, Article 8 postulated that "The land from the Popular Republic of Romania belongs to those who work it."⁹⁷ The new category of private property was defined as follows in Article 12:

Private property rights of citizens of the Popular Republic of Romania over work-based incomes and savings, over their house and the auxiliary household, over domestic goods and objects of personal use, as well as inheritance rights as to citizens' private property are protected by law.⁹⁸

Capitalist private properties that still existed, such as large peasant farmsteads, private trade companies and small non-nationalized industrial enterprises, were announced in paragraph 1 from Article 11. Yet, paragraph 2 from the same article specified that "the popular-democratic state consistently carries out a politics of restricting and eliminating capitalist elements."⁹⁹ Romania's last socialist constitution from 1965 no longer made significant changes in what regards the concept of *property*. Nevertheless, changes occurred in what regards the status of Agricultural Cooperatives of Production and the law regarding the systematization of territory, as well as of cities and villages, of 29 October 1974. These modifications aimed at an objective that had existed since 1952 and which was after "the restriction and abolishment" of private property, so that "Property over any kind of land could only be transferred through legal succession."¹⁰⁰

The changes in the sphere of the conceptual history of the above-described notion of *property* and the political and socio-economic proc-

⁹⁵ On collectivization, see Dobrinu and Iordachi, *Țărănimea și puterea*, cf. documents emitted by the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism. Cătănuș and Roske, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică*, vol. I, 1949–1953; vol. II, 1953–1956; Cătănuș and Roske, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Represiunea*, vol. I, 1949–1953.

⁹⁶ Art. 6 of the 1952 Constitution, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 771.

⁹⁷ Art. 8, *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Art. 12, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Art. 11.1, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Leonhardt, "Die neuere Entwicklung des individuellen Grundeigentums in Rumänien," 110–18, particularly 111.

esses corresponding to them could be understood thanks to the numerous legal, political and historical-agrarian works from socialist Romania.¹⁰¹ These kinds of bibliographical sources were characterized by an extraordinary uniformity and monotony that was only rarely interrupted by critical, unusual moments, such as the speech of President Nicolae Ceaușescu from June 1982 in which he criticized the equation of state property with communitarian property. Years had to go by—and with them a lot of serious intellectual efforts on the part of Romanian jurists—so that this contradiction between communitarian property, with its weakly defined legal entities, and the state, as the representative of all the people, should disappear while there would be a return to the conventional socialist theory of property.¹⁰² It is not clear if this process gave rise to real ideological and political confrontations among the leaders. Such a hypothesis remains open, but the question raised by social anthropology on how the ideological and conceptual-historical notion of *property* in socialism managed to direct the practices of property (its uses and customs) goes beyond the restricted scope of this paper.¹⁰³

One could nonetheless assert that in comparison with the liberal-individualist idea and regime of property, during socialism the promise of a strengthened relation between property and a freely chosen lifestyle disappeared, as well as people's conscious participation in political processes. These ideas were replaced with the technocratic-ideological view of the socialist party, which promised to most appropriately define the common good as a state that could be transposed even at the agricultural level through broad modernization projects.

¹⁰¹ Several texts published over the last several decades could be specified in this sense: *Pământul aparține celor ce-l muncesc. 10 ani de la înfăptuirea reformei agrare* [The land belongs to those who work it. Celebrating ten years since the enforcement of agrarian reform]; Brădeanu, "Pământul ca obiect al diferitelor tipuri și forme de proprietate agricolă în R.P.R.," 34–73; Popescu, *Transformarea socialistă a agriculturii*; Dumitru, *Dreptul de proprietate personală*; Negucioiu, *Proprietatea socialistă în România*.

¹⁰² Cf. Leonhardt, "Zur Entwicklung der Diskussion über das gesellschaftliche Eigentum in Rumänien," 92–9. The Yugoslav socialism of the workers' self-administration vainly attempted to overcome this fundamental paradox.

¹⁰³ Cf. Kideckel, *The Solitude of Collectivism*; Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare*, 33–67.

Rehabilitation and Mythologization of the Liberal-Individualist Property (1989–2009)

In the transitional society of post-communist Romania, private property has benefited from a spectacular ideological rehabilitation. The restitution of expropriated values and goods, and especially of the land, as a result of the collapse or re-privatization of collective and state enterprises, has been expressed through a discursive canon that has made reference to European norms and values as well as to Romanian legal forms from the pre-communist period. However, an open question remains: that of whether property understood in its classical sense could still represent the material basis of a civil society. Considering the route and results of agricultural de-collectivization, land property could no longer observe such a criterion.¹⁰⁴

It should first be noted that the regime of property was not completely reestablished by the reintroduction of the liberal-individualist concept of *property* through Article 41 of the 1991 Constitution.¹⁰⁵ Paragraph 1 from the article does not guarantee property as such but only the right to property, therefore generating a difficult process of the reinstatement of previous owners. At the same time the article shows its allegiance to the Western European traditions regarding restrictions on property when for instance one makes reference to the owners' obligation to protect the environment (Art. 41, 6), or one brings forward the legal parameters establishing the content and limits of property (Art. 41, 1).

A decisive document for the post-communist regime of land property was the Real Estate Law from 19 February 1991.¹⁰⁶ It minutely established how the rights and legacies of previous owners had to be transposed in real life through de-collectivization. As Katherine Verdery noted,¹⁰⁷ peasants were not asked whether or not they agreed with the abolishment of Agricultural Cooperatives of Production; thus de-collectivization followed the same path as collectivization, i.e., by force of law and finally by constraint. This populist measure was initiated at the beginning of 1990

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Cartwright, *The Return of the Peasant*; Von Hirschhausen, *Les nouvelles campagnes roumaines*.

¹⁰⁵ The Constitution was adopted on 21 November 1991 and confirmed by the referendum from 8 December 1991; cf. Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională*, 830–65.

¹⁰⁶ See the text of the law and legal comments, cf. Terzea, *Legile fondului funciar*. On the next legislation, cf. Chelaru, "Stabilirea dreptului de proprietate asupra terenurilor, în condițiile Legii nr. 1/2000," 105–30.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Verdery, *The Vanishing Hectare*, 103.

when the National Salvation Front held the power and offered to all peasants half a hectare of land. The gesture was in the spirit of Romanian property traditions from the eighteenth century and “the long nineteenth century.” It probed a unilateral favor and not a right only due to peasants. As a consequence, the Real Estate Law stipulated that the distribution of collectivized land back to the previous owners should be done upon their filing a request; owners had to bring proof of their property rights.

The question regarding the value of the lands gained by their rightful owners was influenced by various factors, such as the size of the surface they received, how quick and expensive this process was, and how certain the results were of putting someone in possession from a legal point of view. Not least, the question arose whether viable agrarian enterprises might not have emerged on the market as a result of de-collectivization, and whether they were capable to ensure the material basis for the functioning of a rural civil society. Such questions can only have brief answers. This is so because the post-revolutionary political power of Romania only disposed of weak state institutions, except for populist reasons and admitting the existence of good intentions. It did not have enough financial means, it was not prepared, and it did not have the necessary expertise for the sufficient and precise allocation of resources in view of obtaining the expected results.

Let us exemplify just one of the institutional desiderata: to date, the implementation of a mathematically accurate cadastral survey and land register on which everyone could count has proved to be a laborious endeavor; this has led to a high degree of uncertainty in the case of land transactions and, implicitly, to the impossibility for peasants to lease their lands. Thus, the pompously formulated and mythically founded expectations of a liberal-individualist regime of property as the foundation for a society of post-communist owners has been far from satisfactory in the rural areas.¹⁰⁸ As to the regime of property, present-day Romania fits within European normality because the access to real estate—such as land—is no longer the central or unique element on which civic freedom and participation are based. The socialist regime of property, which did not emphasize property but the use of goods, caused an accumulation of social rights consisting in claims for insurance systems, an accumulation that was similar to that from well-off states from Western Europe. It

¹⁰⁸ For a critique of exaggerated expectations regarding the restoration of liberal-individualist property in the post-socialist agriculture, see Hann, *Property Relations*; “Zivilgesellschaft oder Citizenship?,” 85–110.

seems that this relocation of sources of freedom and of civic participation is also starting to become a fixture in point of present-day Romanian society's expectations. Lately, the horizon of expectations in Romania has not been so deeply marked by the idea of restoring to the liberal-individualist regime of property, as used to be the case in the 1990s. In contrast, it has been influenced by the state's project for general welfare, which includes elements restricting property rights.

Conclusions

The trajectory of the concept of *property* throughout Romanian history shows that it has been perceived as a liberal concept only in a very few cases, the practice of property seldom conforming to such principles. The institution of property did not lean on universal and formally equitable property rights, and its great normative promise was never honored. During "the long nineteenth century"—which was also the century of liberalism—the liberal-individualist sense of land property was exclusively the attribute of a small class of great landowners, while the majority of peasants could use the land they worked simply on the basis of common law. This state-of-the-matter should have changed after World War I, when the agrarian reform determined a sudden increase of the number of owners. Yet, what actually happened was a restriction of property rights. From that moment on, a movement started through which property had to be remodeled after national-collectivist and dirigiste patterns. This tendency also continued under the communists, the concept of *property* being configured on the model of class collectivism. The notion of *property* and a regime of property thus configured prompted a concept of planning and modernizing steps, which were meant to remove the country's lagging behind Western Europe. After 1989, when liberal-individualist property was rehabilitated and implemented, the ideological surplus lost ground.

In order to reach its goal, the above-mentioned preliminary considerations regarding a history of the concept and culture of *property* in Romania need the addition of further considerations. Among these, two new approaches are of methodologically high relevance, alongside the need of uniform processing and expansion of sources. To a certain degree, the question of the concept of *property* will be solved when we decide to consider landed property only. It is equally expected that in Romania, too, industrial property and intellectual property will gain increased importance. Finally, in the context of Romania's political and administrative

decentralization, it will be possible to write a history of all kinds of modern concepts provided that one agrees to take into consideration the Transylvanian and Bessarabian socio-political milieus.

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The Notion of *Europe* from the Perspective of Romanian Historical Studies

Hans-Christian Maner

A Brief Overview on the Notion of Europe

Despite the political and economic changes that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, the analysis of the notion *Europe* has regained its central role. In spite of the expansion of the European Union, studies on this topic are complex.¹ Given that, it would be preferable that we distinguish between studies referring to the institutional expansion of Europe² and those focusing on the image, idea, and discourse of Europe.³ Adrian

¹ Most of these publications refer to Western Europe: Rainer Hudemann, Hartmut Kaelble, Klaus Schwabe (eds.), *Europa im Blick der Historiker* (München: Oldenburg, 1995); Heinz Duchhardt and Andreas Kund (eds.), *“Europäische Geschichte” als historiographisches Problem* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1997); Wulf Köpke and Bernd Schmelz, *Das gemeinsame Haus Europas. Handbuch zur europäischen Kulturgeschichte* (München: Dtv 1999); Kaelble, *Europäer über Europa*; Wittinger, *Europäische Staaten oder Wo endet Europa?*; Blickle, *Das Alte Europa, vom Hochmittelalter bis zur Moderne*.

² Hüttmann, et al., *Das neue Europa*; Lenich, *Beitrittsproblematik Rumäniens zur EU; Opfer, Die ungeliebte EU-Südosterweiterung*.

³ Heinz Duchhardt and Malgorzata Moraviec, *Vision Europa. Deutsche und polnische Föderationspläne des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2003); Heinz Duchhardt, and István Németh (eds.), *Der Europa-Gedanke in Ungarn und Deutschland in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Mainz: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); broadly cf. Markus Krienke, and Matthias Belaï (eds.), *Identitäten in Europa – Europäische Identität* (Wiesbaden: DUV 2007); *Europa-Visionen*, Berlin, 2007 (including contributions on Poland and Hungary); Frank Baasner (ed.), *Von welchem Europa reden wir? Reichweite nationaler Europadiskurse* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2008) (this book investigates, among other things, discourses about Europe from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary). On discourses about Europe from Eastern Europe under socialism, cf. the anthology edited by Faraldo, et al., *Europa im Ostblock*; for contributions on Romania, see C. Petrescu, “Conflicting Perceptions of (Western) Europe”; D. Petrescu, “Eastern Europe, Central Europe or Europe?.” Brief overviews in Schlögel, *Die Rückkehr des Ostens in den europäischen Horizont, in Europas Gedächtnis. Das neue Europa fünfzig Jahre nach den Römischen Verträgen*, (Bielefeld, 2008), 147–68.

Marino concentrated on the idea of Europe in Romanian culture, while Sorin Mitu described the image of *Europe* for Romanians from the region of Ardeal.⁴

The notion of *Europe* is made up of two Greek words, *euris* ("far") and *opis* ("gaze," "face") and can be translated as "[the woman] with a far-reaching gaze." As such, it can have numerous meanings: it can be Zeus's lover from Greek mythology, an astronomic apparition (one designating planet Jupiter's moon), an African island in the Mosambic Channel, a name of an automobile or ship, or a name in TV and broadcasting. However, it is mainly associated with the name of a continent and it additionally implies the confederation of states known as the European Union (henceforth referred to by its usual abbreviation, EU). All descriptions and processes of definition regarding Europe essentially mark the dynamics that started with the creation of the EU.⁵ The six member states that founded the European Union of Coal and Steel were identified with Europe in the 1950s. This identification of the EU with Europe has remained a valid formula and its authority seems irreversible at present.⁶

What is Europe? Regarded from the perspective of the EU, Europe is an entity which has set as its goal the attempt to become a unitary space from an economic, monetary and legal point of view. Administrative measures cannot guarantee by themselves the political-economic functioning of the European Union, and even less so can they guarantee their existence on the same level with *Europe*. In this sense, we have to deal with cultural meanings and a European identity that can offer legitimacy and coherence to the institutionalized structure represented by the EU. Overall, the notion of *Europe* eludes a precise definition, the cultural connotation of a *European identity* being extremely complex and open to multiple interpretations. The specific character of European identity consists in the fact that it does not admit a general notion despite the fact that there are a lot of similarities that could lead to the idea of a common identity.⁷

⁴ Marino, *Pentru Europa*; and Revenirea în Europa; Mitu, *Imagini europene și mentalități românești*; *Transilvania mea*, 124–35; see also Antohi, *Civitas imaginalis*; Husar, *Ideea europeană*. On historiography, see Cristian, *Istoriografie generală*. On basic sources, see also *Reflectarea istoriei universale în istoriografia românească*.

⁵ Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*, 7.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For a definition of the concept of *Europe* and its nuanced meaning in point of the topic broached here, see Neumann, *Tentația lui Homo Europaeus*.

Why Is It Important to Know the Notion of *Europe*?

My starting point will be the premise that *Europe* is a relevant notion from the point of view of conceptual history. It is a notion that defines a “set of practices and communicative procedures” that is characterized by “programmatically excessive [...] associated with normative vagueness.”⁸ According to historian Reinhart Koselleck, the notion of *Europe* undoubtedly involves social and political components that can only be clarified by taking into account the spatial and temporal experiences of its evolution. One could investigate, for instance, to what degree the notion of *Europe* mirrors history and can represent meanings of the past.⁹ Since the topic of my paper is represented by the semantics of the notion of *Europe* in Romanian culture, I will focus on the meanings of this notion as they are reflected in Romanian historiography, and ask: What is understood by the notion of *Europe* in Romanian written history?¹⁰ Possible answers consider Europe as a geographical space, as a form of self-conscious communitarian existence, or as a term epitomizing the idea of civilization. In all these cases we need clarifications in order to identify what areas this notion covers, to what degree and how exactly this happens.

An analysis of the historical semantics of the notion of *Europe* in Romanian culture reveals how the notion started to be used more frequently once the conscience of the past and hopes for the future took center stage in the mental collective.¹¹ Studies on Central and South-Eastern Europe prove that the notion of *Europe* was closely related to the problem of national formation and the national state. The most heated debates occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and were primarily located in Romania rather than in any other state from the region.¹² Afterwards, starting with the political and economic changes from the end of the twentieth century, *Europe* returned to the core of debates. My paper means to analyze those publications regarding Europe’s institutional expansion¹³ and those focusing on the European imaginary.

⁸ Knobloch, “Überlegungen zur Theorie der Begriffsgeschichte,” 7–24, particularly 11.

⁹ Koselleck, *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte*; and *Begriffsgeschichten*.

¹⁰ Schmale, *Geschichte Europas*, 13–15.

¹¹ See Leonhard, *Liberalismus*, 63.

¹² Höpken, “‘Europäisierung’ vs ‘Autochthonie,’” 91–108.

¹³ Hüttmann, et al., *Das neue Europa*; Lenich, *Beitrittsproblematik Rumäniens*; Opfer, *Die ungeliebte EU*.

The Notion of *Europe* in Chronicles and Dimitrie Cantemir's Historical Writings

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century chroniclers such as Ion Neculce and Nicolae Costin used the notion of *Europe* in a cultural-political sense that referred to the unity of Christianity to which Wallachia and Moldavia belonged.¹⁴ In such chronicles, the synonyms of the notion of *Europe* were: *Christianity as a whole*, *Christian empires*, *Western countries*, *Christian monarchs*, and *Christian emperors and rulers*.¹⁵

In *Descriptio Moldaviae*, Dimitrie Cantemir¹⁶ revamped the last meaning mentioned above. When he asserted that the river that had always drawn the country's borders, namely the Danube, was "the largest river of Europe,"¹⁷ or when he noted that the Cotnari wine was "the most exquisite and noble of Europe's wines, to a higher degree than even Tokay," Cantemir emphasized the geographical importance of the notion of *Europe*. In *Hronicul vechimii a romano-moldo-vlahilor* (*The Chronicle of the Ancestry of Roman-Moldavian-Wallachs*), he used the notion of Europe to name a geographical area to which Roman-Moldavian-Wallachs belonged, to indicate how Dacians used to live in Europe and to specify that Romans used to rule this continent. The high number of references to the geographical sense of the notion of *Europe* from *Istoria Imperiului Otoman* (*The History of the Ottoman Empire*) is worth mentioning too. In Cantemir's view, Ottoman troops permanently moved between *Asia* and *Europe*.¹⁸ In his description of the Nicopolis battle from 1396, he indicated that Sultan Baiazid I started off with his troops "towards Europe"¹⁹; in this context, the notion of the West was to confer on Europe an increasingly straightforward political importance.

A humanist and erudite, Dimitrie Cantemir was "a traveler between worlds" who noticed the distinctions between the Ottoman Empire and the West in the area represented by *Europe*. Following his observations, before the coming of the Ottomans, Europe spread up to the Eastern borders of the Byzantine Empire. After the latter empire disappeared, Europe was

¹⁴ On the beginning of Romanian historical studies cf. Teodor, *Die Entwicklung des historischen Denkens*, v–xlvi.

¹⁵ Ciobanu, "Die Europa," 76–9.

¹⁶ Cantemir, *Fürst der Moldau*.

¹⁷ Cf. Ciobanu, "Die Europa," 70.

¹⁸ Cantemir, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches nach seinem Anwachsen und Abnehmen*, 67f.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

continuously pushed towards the West. Following this framework of thought, before recognizing the suzerainty of the sultan in the fifteenth century, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia belonged to Europe, and then they were integrated in a different context than the European one.²⁰

Nevertheless, Europe was not only regarded from a geographical point of view in *Hronicul vechimii a romano-moldo-vlahilor* (*The Chronicle of the Ancestry of Roman-Moldavian-Wallachs*). Therein, Cantemir actually wanted to locate the history of the above-mentioned principalities within the general history of Europe. He foregrounded the Latin origins of the inhabitants and the nobleness of their Roman origins, and compared their ancestry with that of other European peoples:

In this way we will show that the people [represented by Roman-Moldavian-Wallachs, n.n.] have an older and more mature history than other European peoples, so that no other people could compete with its old ancestral origins.²¹

At the end of the eighteenth century, the notion of *Europe* acquired a new, distinctive connotation which referred to *Enlightenment*, spiritual progress, creative values, technical achievements, or, in one word, *civilization*.²² Once the notion of *Europe* came to be equated with that of the culturally advanced West, it acquired an opposite meaning which has remained the dominant one to date.

Moldavia and Wallachia – The Opposite of “Europe” from Mihail Kogălniceanu’s Perspective

Europe seen as a foreign world was clearly depicted in the writings of the Moldavian historian and politician Mihail Kogălniceanu. He therein drew the portrait of a Europe dominated by ignorance in regard to Romanian principalities, and his aim was to correct such a perception. His 1836 article, “Moldavia and Muntenia. Romanian or Wallachian Language and Literature,” suggested that Romanians’ consciousness of belonging to

²⁰ On the East-West symbiosis in Cantemir’s work, see Cantemir, *Divanul*, Cantemir, *Opere complete*, vol. I, 128.

²¹ Cantemir, *Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor*, 9.

²² Marino, “Les lumières roumaines decouvrent l’Europe,” in Romul Munteanu (ed.), *La culture roumaine à l’époque des lumières*, vol. I, (Bucharest, Univers, 1982), 45f.; Duțu: *Coordonate ale culturii românești în secolul al XVIII-lea*, 158–67.

Europe had existed from as early as the pre-modern era, yet, as time went by, Romanian history, language and culture had first to be brought back to the attention of European consciousness and thus become anchored in it.

Distinguishing between Europe or the West and what he called Oriental Europe, Kogălniceanu described the heroic events or social advance that in his view would characterize the two Romanian Principalities in comparison to other countries from Eastern Europe:

Of all the countries of Oriental Europe, Moldavia and Muntenia are almost definitely the least well known, and yet, these principalities do not at all deserve such neglect. The history of these countries is filled with historical events which could have honored even the Greeks and Romans; let us only remember the victories of Stephen the Great, the ruler of Moldavia, the courage of Helen, his mother, or the entire life of Michael the Brave, the ruler of Muntenia. The governments of Moldavia and Muntenia offered to European Oriental peoples the first example of the liberation of enslaved people. In Poland, Russia and other surrounding countries peasants used to and continue to be slaves while in Romania they have all enjoyed freedom since 1740.²³

Kogălniceanu's article is a response to an 1836 paper by the French philologist F.G. Eichhof, "Parallèle des langues de l'Europe et de l'Inde" ("A Comparison between the Languages from Europe and India"), in which the Romanian language was characterized as "Valacue parlé dans un coin de la Turquie d'Europe" ("a Wallachian language spoken in some European corners of Turkey"), associated to a low level of culture, and hence being of little interest.²⁴ Nevertheless, Kogălniceanu appealed to Cantemir's line of argumentation in order to prove the Latin character of Romanian and, implicitly, the idea that Romanians were rightful members of Europe.

Kogălniceanu belonged to the generation of 1848 writers that had been formed in France and Germany and who, on the one hand, hoped that Romanians would scientifically and culturally fit in the Western world, and on the other hand, supported the idea of keeping and highlighting national specificity.²⁵ The promotion of national history thus had a double

²³ Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. I, *Beletristica, studii literare, culturale și sociale* [Fiction, literary, cultural and social studies], 239.

²⁴ Ibid. Cf. also Zub, *Mihail Kogălniceanu*, 323–9.

²⁵ Bianca Valota, "Institutionalisierungsvorgänge der rumänischen Geschichtswissenschaft bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg," in Mathias Middell, Gabriele Lingelbach, Frank Hadler (eds.), *Historische Institute im internationalen Vergleich* (Leipzig: Akademische Verlaganstalt, 2001), 151.

aim, consolidating national consciousness and the importance of getting closer to Europe. Analyzing the European history of the first millennium, Kogălniceanu concluded his article by noting that “The history of all these barbarian peoples which is connected to the beginning of our nation would remain in the dark if we didn’t uncover it thanks to the history of Romanians.”²⁶

“Our efforts” remained primordial and, given their importance, their aim lay beyond *Europe*. This was so because, as Kogălniceanu rightly asserted in 1843, by getting to know the history of Romanians with its multiple implications, a part of universal history would be also uncovered.²⁷ In his view, historical events of global significance had occurred on the territory of Danubian principalities and they had also involved Romanians’ ancestors. The region had been the location where “foreigners’ invasions and wars” had succeeded one another: thus, “we find Darie, Alexander the Great, or Lisimah fighting against the Dacians”:

A hundred years passed and our motherland changed into a Roman colony and started to be the scene on which the empire’s fate was decided by barbarians; the battle between Barbary and civilization was fought at the Danube. Alans, Avars, Gepids, Goths, Huns, Lombards, Bulgarians, we saw all of these passing through our countries, celebrating and ending Caesar’s rule, one after the other leaving it far behind and eventually remaking the face of Europe. The history of all these barbarian peoples, which is connected to the beginning of our nation, would remain in the dark if we didn’t uncover it thanks to the history of Romanians.²⁸

Additionally, the principalities made up that region in which Hungarians, Poles, and the Ottoman, Habsburg and Tsarist Empires confronted one another. In light of this, Kogălniceanu saw the history of Romanians as representing the climax of European history. The Danube became the outer border of Europe, and the history of the Danubian principalities was the key to understanding the history of the peoples from this region. It was not only the historians’ task to discover this central role and thereby awaken and strengthen national consciousness; *Europe* also had to discover this “sunken (or hidden, n.n.) truth” as their own gain which also related to a part of themselves that had been wrongly neglected until then. In a text from 1850, the same Mihail Kogălniceanu showed that *Europe*, understood as the culturally advanced West, could become a double-edged sword:

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Kogălniceanu, “Cuvânt pentru deschiderea cursului de istorie națională.”

²⁸ Ibid.

We have taken from Europe its luxury, corruption and surface forms, but we have not taken its ideas of freedom and justice, material welfare and genial discoveries which today make the century's fame.²⁹

Danubian Principalities: Between Europe and the Orient

A generation later, the historian Alexandru D. Xenopol resumed Kogălniceanu's reflections and insisted that the backward position of the Danubian principalities towards what he called *Europe*—namely the West—should be explained simultaneously with the clear demonstration that the principalities are part of this Europe:

From the beginnings of our stately being, we have been subjected to the influence of much stronger and numerous neighboring peoples. Our life was not our own life until recently, it used to previously be the result of controversies among the powers surrounding us.³⁰

At the same time, continuing Kogălniceanu's ideas, in 1905 Xenopol foregrounded the important role of Romanian history for Europe, as the fight of the Romanian rulers against the Turks and as a form of resistance on the part of this Latin element from the East which was represented by Romanians³¹:

That element which energetically opposed itself to the Ottoman occupation was the Latin element from the East, namely Romanians. Through their fight, they weakened Turkish power so that when the latter occupied Hungary, their power reached an endpoint. Romanians thus defended Western civilization against the Turkish conquest; this is where their great importance for European history lies.³²

Additionally, in a text from 1914, Xenopol reminded his readers that Europe should not forget that its life standard and cathedrals were partly due to the fights that had taken place for centuries on end in the Carpathian-Danubian world.³³ In 1868, he wondered if Romanians could become equal partners with a significant contribution to European history without getting any outside help: "Only those peoples that managed to

²⁹ Kogălniceanu, "Tainele inimei," 100–1.

³⁰ Quote by Cristian, "Preocupări de istorie universală în opera lui A.D. Xenopol," 108.

³¹ Xenopol, "Rolul românilor în Orient," 72; quote after Cristian, "Preocupări," 109.

³² Ibid.

³³ See Constantin, "A.D. Xenopol peste hotare," 439.

reach the stage of a national life and a clear conscience of their existence have contributed with something to mankind's welfare."³⁴ At the same time, Xenopol showed that the notion of *Europe* lacked a basic commonly shared idea, an integrative principle, and that this made it difficult to create a unity to which the principalities would also belong. In this sense, Romanian intellectuals foresaw the possibility of the country's unification in a homogeneous culture made up of the various movements that were characterized by ideas specific to each nation.

Transylvania as an Integral Part of "Europe"

After the establishment of the Habsburg monarchy, a decisive role for Transylvanian Romanians and their position in Europe was played by the Greek-Catholic Church.³⁵ With the opening of study centers in Vienna, Trnava and Rome, priests saw how the gate to the spiritual and cultural world of Central and Western Europe opened up for them. The Ardeal School was the first to face the notion of *Europe* in the eighteenth century.³⁶ On the one hand, *Europe* meant Christianity, as opposed to the Ottoman Empire or the pagan world.³⁷ On the other hand, the Romanian language was seen as a part of the great family of Romance languages. This particularity made the Romanian scholars Samuil Micu, Ioan Budai Deleanu and Petru Maior urge Romanians to direct themselves towards learned peoples,³⁸ towards a Europe that stood for both civilization and rationalism, and towards the world in which there was no scholar who did not know Latin from which even Romanian had originated.³⁹

One could assert that Transylvanian Romanians had an accurate image of a symbolical *Europe* which meant Enlightenment, progress and culture, a real situation to which they wanted to direct themselves after centuries of backwardness. The historian Sorin Mitu proved that nineteenth-century

³⁴ Xenopol, "Cultura națională," 283, cited by Cristian, *Istoria universală*, 110.

³⁵ See *Biserica Română Unită*; Someșan, *Începuturile Bisericii Române Unite*; Prunduș, *Catolicism și ortodoxie românească*; Mureșan and Știrban, *Din istoria Bisericii Române Unite*.

³⁶ The Ardeal School was a cultural movement of Transylvanian Romanians that appeared at the end of the eighteenth century; see Lungu, *Școala Ardeleană*; Stanciu, "Școala Ardeleană un subiect epuizat?," 105–12; Chindriș, *Cultură și societate în contextul Școlii Ardelene*, 113, 259.

³⁷ On these and other aspects, cf. Stanciu, "Voci ardelene despre Europa," 117–26.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

Romanian intellectuals from Ardeal defined Europe both culturally and geographically,⁴⁰ considering themselves to be part of both the Habsburg Empire or Hungary and Europe and, more precisely, considering themselves as “a sentinel of Western Europe in the Orient,” thus defining the notion of *Europe* through otherness.⁴¹ This understanding of Western Europe has remained unchanged in Romanian culture.

The Unity of Europe and Nicolae Iorga's Universal History

Nicolae Iorga represented the case of a universal spirit that entered upon the scene of Romanian historical studies. His historical thought was deeply influenced by A.D. Xenopol, but it also bore the mark of the education he received in Italy, France, England and Germany, where he learned from Karl Lamprecht. His first works that established him as a historian focused on broad European topics, such as *Thomas III, Marquis de Saluces, étude historique et littéraire* (*Thomas III, Marquis of Saluces, A Historical and Literary Study*) or *Philippe de Mézières, 1327–1405, et la croisade au XIV-e siècle* (*Philippe de Mézières, 1327–1405, and the 14th Century Crusade*).⁴² One could say that Iorga, together with Ioan Bogdan and Dimitrie Onciul, represented a group of historians that were top-notch representatives of the time's European historical science. Even if in Iorga's case, the main interest fell on the Middle Ages as well as on the history of literature and culture, his comprehensive oeuvre went far beyond that specific scope; that is why in what follows I will only refer to some aspects and basic directing lines.⁴³

Xenopol's most prominent student, Iorga took over his professor's ideas and in his turn treated Europe as a higher-level entity while trying to bring Romania in dialogue with it. For Iorga, focusing on Europe equally meant paying attention to his own identity. European history was constantly included in universal history, and Iorga investigated the latter with as much interest as Xenopol. In this sense, Romania was understood as being a part of Europe and at the same time a part of universal history.

⁴⁰ Mitu, *Transilvania mea*, 128.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 132f.

⁴² A French writer and political counsellor, Philippe de Mézières was fascinated by the idea of crusades. Iorga's work appeared in Paris in 1896.

⁴³ Iorga's works were included in a comprehensive but not exhaustive two-volume bibliography. Theodorescu, *Bibliografia istorică și literară a lui N. Iorga*.

When he broadly broached European topics, Iorga simultaneously talked about the close relation between national and universal history:

In this way, the difference to date between universal and national history disappears, it is only kept alive in the pedant and comfortable distinctions among various history departments within universities. A people's life is constantly connected with other peoples' lives, it depends upon these and permanently influences them. Each nation is a unique source of energy from which one's special character and mission loom out. Yet, none of these energies allows itself to be completely isolated and hence it must not be isolated.⁴⁴

The historian not only insisted on the connection between different peoples' histories; he also foregrounded commonly shared Western and Eastern European elements whose combination would have led to specific civilizational traits. Romanians were depicted as the legitimate heirs of this merge, because Romanian history could not only be known through a foray into neighbor regions—as in the case of France—but it also presupposed knowing the history of all neighbor countries as well as the history of the entire Oriental half of Europe. In *Essai d'une synthèse de l'histoire de l'Humanité* (*Essay on a Synthesis of the History of Mankind*), published in 1926 and 1928, Iorga claimed that all the civilizational movements of the West were exercised upon the East of Europe so that “one had to simultaneously investigate a large part and a whole component of Western history.”⁴⁵ One of Iorga's main interests was to define the position of Romanians in European history. In order to bring “a useful contribution to universal history”⁴⁶ in his three brief, chronologically arranged studies (“Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” “Modern History” and “Contemporary History”), the historian focused upon the discovery of analogies, intertwining, and reciprocal influences between Romanian history and the European past.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Iorga, *Generalități cu privire la studiile istorice*. This is a quote after the German translation from Pompiliu Teodor, *Die Entwicklung des historischen Denkens*, 237; Iorga, *Originea și dezvoltarea istoriei universale*, 4.

⁴⁵ Iorga, *Generalități cu privire la studiile istorice*, 153–4; *Le rôle des Roumains dans la latinité*, 11; Almaș, “Conceptul de sinteză a istoriei universale la N. Iorga,” 123–33.

⁴⁶ Iorga, *Locul românilor în istoria universală*, 7; “Începuturile istoriei universale la Români,” 83–114.

⁴⁷ Besides these, see also Iorga, “Études roumaines,” 3; *Histoire des relations entre la France et les Roumains*; “La pénétration des idées de l'Occident dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe,” 102–38; “Paralelisme helveto-române,” 340–50; “Paralelisme și inițiativă de istorie universală la români,” 375–95.

Nicolae Iorga and South-Eastern Europe

Iorga saw Romania as a cultural center of Christian Eastern Europe, a glowing example for other South-Eastern European peoples in point of appropriating Western European cultural and political movements. According to Iorga, Romania's position in South-Eastern Europe and its ability to assimilate European and national values allowed the country to claim "a spiritual guiding role in the East," something which first occurred when Iorga founded the Institute of South-Eastern European Studies in Bucharest in 1913. Iorga considered this to be "a more natural mission" here than anywhere else.

Iorga's motivation for founding the institute was the idea of the unity of European culture, also identifiable in South-Eastern Europe because—contrary to wide-spread beliefs—Iorga's thesis was that nationalities were closely tied and related to one another via origins and development:

In other respects, before dealing with institutions, it is enough to just throw a glance on the South-Eastern European world in order to show how all these nations are related by origin, interdependent in point of development and solidary as to their present situation.⁴⁸

This thesis was based on numerous archeologically identifiable similarities that existed even in point of pre-Roman living forms. In Iorga's words, "All villages are the same—be they a Romanian village, a Serbian, Bulgarian or Tracian one." Also, the same type of village existed from the region of the Nipres in the East, to the Hungarian Plains in the West.⁴⁹ Finally, there were "numerous similarities" between

[...] a Serb from Serbia and a Czech citizen, [who are] both Slavic, and, even more, between a Czech citizen and a Russian citizen from Moscow, who are also Slavic, perhaps also between a Romanian citizen from a specific Danubian region and one from a Carpathian region, or between an Italian from Sicily and one from Gênes.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Iorga, *Le caractère commun des institutions du Sud-Est de l'Europe*, 3; "Les formes politiques dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe," 27–62: "Du reste, avant d'aller aux institutions, un seul regard sur ce monde du Sud-Est de l'Europe peut suffire à montrer combien toutes ces nations sont apparantées dans leur origine, reliées dans leur développement et solidaires dans leur situation actuelle."

⁴⁹ Iorga, *Le caractère commun*, 3–5: "Un village roumain, un village serbe, un village bulgare, un village de Thrace [...] sont les mêmes."

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6–7: "Un Serbe de Serbie et un Tchèque, qui sont des Slaves, ou, encore, entre un Tchèque et un Russe de Moscou, qui sont encore des Slaves; peut-être aussi entre un Roumain de telle région danubienne ou carpathique et entre un Italien de Sicile ou de Gênes."

One can notice that, in Iorga's view, the human groups that considered themselves to be ancestrally related were those between which there were similarities in the fiscal, legal, military areas, but not in the sense of various communities living on the same territory, in cooperation and proximity. The historian's ideas reflected a well-known ethnicist point of view that in fact epitomized his entire historical approach.

In the field of religion, Iorga was opposed to the clear-cut separation between Orthodox and Catholic Christianity, and he identified influences coming from the West towards the East. Albeit South-Eastern and Eastern Europe were areas dominated by an Orthodox population, ties with the West determined cultural-religious borrowings in the case of Romania. Such was the case, for instance, in point of the use of terms such as *preot* (*priest*) or *popă* (*parson*) for priesthood or the election of priests by laymen. The idea of a continental encounter between the West and the East also resulted from the analysis of the positions and onomastic of Romania's local nobility, which proved to be a *mélange* of Byzantine and Western influences. The Carpathian-Danubian space therefore appeared as a contact zone *par excellence*.

Nicolae Iorga and the Byzantium

Iorga's aims included his desire to determine the place of Romania in Europe and European history. In this sense, he considered the country situated north of the Danube as the central cultural point of Christian Eastern Europe, as well as an intermediary and primarily glorious example of the amalgamation of Western cultural and political movements with national ones. That is why Romanians "claim[ed] a leading spiritual role in the East,"⁵¹ an idea that consciously legitimated Greater Romania's geopolitical position in Iorga's view, a goal that was reached and consolidated after the end of World War I. In this context, leaning upon the thesis of his predecessor Xenopol and on his own efforts to put forth an alternative model to a superior Europe, Iorga went one step further and introduced the *Byzantium* model. In fact, Iorga gained his renown especially as a specialist in the history of the Byzantium, a fact that was attested thanks to the impressive number of works in this field: 24 collections of sources, 19 works of synthesis, 95 special monographs and articles, and 120 reviews.⁵² From his point of view, the history of the Byzantium comprised:

⁵¹ Ibid., 3. Iorga, "Les formes politiques," 27–62.

⁵² Pippidi, "Bibliografia lucrărilor lui N. Iorga referitoare la Bizanț și cruciade," 235–50.

[...] the histories of South-Eastern Europe, of the entire Near East, of whole regions from Africa, the Mediterranean Sea as well as movements that went as far as the borders of the Western world, even up to Ireland, following the West's relations with the Greek and Byzantine world, or up to those Anglo-Saxon empires whose kings called themselves Basils.⁵³

Iorga's historical approach refused the perspective of Western European historians according to whom the East was only an annex, a periphery of the West. In concrete terms, the fact that he founded the Institute of South-Eastern European Studies in 1913 reflected his interest in this topic. This approach led to a new idea that started to circulate in the international scientific world at the time, one that held that South-Eastern Europe was not only made up of riotous peoples representing the "ticking bomb of Europe," but a world with a past, present, and future which could prove its permanent and unitary development and could undoubtedly be integrated in other historical units of the world.⁵⁴ Moreover, Iorga put forth the novel idea of elaborating a history from the perspective of this region of the continent, and not one thought from the West towards the East:

We do not have one single reason for which to continue and accept the history of mankind as it has been written by great peoples in a divergent manner and form, and following pretensions that are beyond any method. By using our geographical existence as well as the existence of syntheses imposed upon us, we have to establish basic lines and main directions characterizing the world's course which others have neglected even though they might have been aware of their existence.⁵⁵

In his opening speech for the 1934–1935 academic year entitled "Universal History and National Histories," Iorga clearly exposed his thesis according to which the French had exaggerated the significance of their historical role and had tended to ignore Eastern Europe. In actual fact, Iorga proved that for centuries on end the core point of European history had been represented by the Byzantium, by means of which Western Europe had oriented itself and acted.⁵⁶ Based on his analysis of medieval rapports between Western Europe and the Byzantium, especially carried out in the first of the three volumes of the work *Popes and Emperors*, Iorga showed that "the history of the Middle Ages was not really the history of a large number of nations but a unity of organization and con-

⁵³ Iorga, "Viitorul studiilor bizantine," 137.

⁵⁴ Zamfirescu, "Bizanțul lui Nicolae Iorga"; Iorga, *Sinteza bizantină*, xxxi–xxxii.

⁵⁵ Iorga, *Probleme de istorie universală și românească*, 5.

⁵⁶ Quote from Zamfirescu, "Bizanțul lui Nicolae Iorga," xxxiii.

sciousness, all this since nations modernly understood and not as privileged constitutional entities have never existed.”⁵⁷

A significant part of Iorga's analytical forays went beyond his interest in the past and was dedicated to finding elements of unity in universal history, more precisely in European history: what he meant was to make “the Byzantium” a category for the present too.⁵⁸ In light of this, the stages of a European history that imperiled the above-mentioned unity, given their attempt to construct a new medieval-type of unity, were the following: the relations between the newly-created church centers of Rome and Constantinople before and during the reign of Justinian (527–565), the long-lasting controversies between Rome, the Byzantium and the Longobards, the crowning of Charles the Great in 800, and the effects of this on papality and the Byzantium. These were followed by historians' focus on important events from Western Europe: the reign of the Ottons, papal schisms, Frederic Barbarossa's reign, Frederic II's Empire, France and Germany and their opposition to papality.

In the second volume, Iorga dealt with modern history as a result of the long-lasting struggle between papality and the empire, which occurred during the Middle Ages and was destructive in point of any kind of unity.⁵⁹ This rupture offered Christianity a new possibility to find its unity via cooperation in the fight against the Turks, who were heading forward towards Europe. Nevertheless, the Fall of Constantinople was a clear signal of failure and the search for unity was transferred to the cultural field once the Renaissance started. In the political sphere, Iorga held that between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, the idea of unity was replaced by alliances and leagues which aimed at maintaining equilibrium and obtaining imperial hegemony on the continent to the detriment of unity. Alongside the Catholic Church, which was after unity, a uniformization of contemporary Europe was also suggested by the court cultures of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Scandinavia and the Danubian principalities. This attempt also failed eventually when court life became a life of debauchery made up of “limitless and shameless” parties.⁶⁰

The third volume was dedicated to finding the unity characteristic of the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of

⁵⁷ Iorga, *Elementele de unitate ale lumii medievale, moderne și contemporane*, vol. I, 5.

⁵⁸ Zamfirescu, *N. Iorga*, 11.

⁵⁹ Iorga, *Elementele de unitate ale lumii medievale, moderne și contemporane*, vol. II.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

the twentieth century⁶¹: it included the systematic structuring of society based upon the abstract principles of the French Revolution, Napoleon I's military efforts, the controversies between liberal and reactionary Europe, and the new movements represented by socialism and nationalism. At the same time, Iorga deemed it dangerous to spread the idea of a contemporary European history in which humanity did not exist, and in which "the hero of unrest and revolt" was exalted to the detriment of the "hero of reason." In his view, a genuine contemporary history would have had to cultivate the modern person and promote human capital, thereby resulting in an enriched millennium-old treasure-gene of humanity.⁶²

In Iorga's view, the synthesis between the East and the West was represented by the concept of *Byzantium* which was the founding stone of a united Europe. In this context, the East could contribute with Orthodoxy and Asian aspects, while the West would bring the Roman and Greek civilizations. He related the idea of synthesis to civilization, literature, art, philosophy and religion. Flexibility represented a fundamental trait of the Byzantine person; this was due to the synthesis of two dimensions of civilization, those of Western and Eastern Europe.

A phrase Iorga coined in one of his titles has become well known—the phrase of "Byzance après Byzance" ("the Byzantium after the Byzantium"),⁶³ through which the historian proposed the idea of Byzantium as a valid concept for the future. In one of his international conferences held on 30 January 1936 at the Institute for the History of Art in Utrecht, Iorga insisted upon the main features that could make the Byzantium an example for a new universal unity. They comprised: the inclusion of various peoples within its borders without having any state or nation decide upon the others, the special solidarity of each nation to the others, and the presentation of these nations as a united bloc to the outside world.⁶⁴

Iorga saw this Byzantine idea of the Middle Ages not only as a model for a united Europe of the distant past, but also as a model for a united Europe of the last two centuries. "Old Europe" with its "political and moral unity," with its special spirituality and respect for the other was opposed to a Europe that was "cut into pieces and existed only on the map," a Europe

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Iorga, *O altă istorie contemporană*, 5.

⁶³ Iorga's monographic work *Byzance après Byzance, continuation de l'Histoire de la vie byzantine* was first published in Bucharest in 1935. See also Cicanci, "Concepția lui Nicolae Iorga despre 'Byzance après Byzance'," 201–33.

⁶⁴ Iorga, "Bizanțul în occident," 106–8.

“which some of the contemporary thinkers were trying to create.”⁶⁵ Out of the concept of a failed Europe which Iorga processed throughout his three above-mentioned volumes, the necessity for creating a “new Europe” was born, one in which the principles of co-habitation were founded on what Iorga called “local organic life.” Post-World War I Europe was a Europe of numerous national states in which the rigid nationalism of certain peoples oppressed other nationalities. Iorga considered this to be a new issue, which was due to the fact that many new states with partially arbitrary borders did not contain all the members of one nation within their borders. From the point of view of certain nations, the border did not represent a line “but a region which could be expanded.” The new national state should not on any account make use of the method of national persecution, nor should it limit itself as a nation and isolate itself from “the general culture of humankind” and thereby bury the idea of unity. Instead, it should promote respect and tolerance to human diversity and it should contribute to the development of the complex national idea.⁶⁶ Even in the 1930s, Iorga was still deeply convinced that a united Europe was possible, one in which all states had equal rights, and in which powerful states did not persecute weak ones. In view of the same united Europe, Iorga suggested that the inhabitants of New Europe should at least learn French, English, Italian and German, if not also Slavic languages, Finnish and Irish.⁶⁷ In his view, and even though he had mentioned them in his studies,⁶⁸ Slavic peoples were not at the center of his reflections on a European unity. The history of Slavic peoples was a main topic of interest for other historians, but not for him.

Slavic Europe

Unlike Nicolae Iorga, his contemporary, the Transylvanian historian and Slavist Ion Bogdan (1863–1919) focused on the contribution of Slavic people and their culture to the history of Romania, Europe, and the world.⁶⁹ Even though the Slavs had already occupied vast regions of

⁶⁵ Iorga, “Vechea și noua Europă,” 77. This contribution by Iorga was born during a summer school held at People’s School from Vălenii de Munte, the locality in which the historian lived.

⁶⁶ Iorga, *Originea și dezvoltarea*, 9.

⁶⁷ Iorga, “Vechea și noua Europă,” 182.

⁶⁸ Valeria Costăchel, “Nicolae Iorga, istoric al popoarelor slave” [Nicolae Iorga, a historian of Slavic peoples], in *Romanoslavica*, vol. 17, 1970: 497–522.

⁶⁹ Teodor, *Die Entwicklung des historischen Denkens*, 207; also cf. Panaitescu, “Ioan Bogdan și studiile de istorie slavă la români,” v–xvii.

Europe by the early Middle Ages, representing one of the largest Indo-European groups, Bogdan deplored the insignificant role attributed to the Slavs in European culture⁷⁰ and considered that there were two main causes for this situation: the influence of Christian Churches and the poor political organization of Slavic peoples at the time when they first appeared on the European scene. From hence sprang his interest in highlighting the importance of Slavs for Europe and its history. Making constant references to the historian Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu (1838–1907), Bogdan put forward a new segment of the European scene, that of the Slavic world,⁷¹ in a context in which some representatives of the Ardeal School had not only focused on Romanity and Western Europe but also on the Slavic influence upon history, culture, and particularly the language of Romanians, ideas that have been accurately presented by Radu Mârza. These scholars obviously shared a regional view of Europe as it emerged from their use of such topics as the relations between Romanians and Southern Slavs, or Romanianness at the south of the Danube.⁷² Placing Romanians within South-Eastern European history meant the recognition of an ambivalent situation that had been well highlighted by representatives of the Ardeal School, and which proved the mediating role of Romanians between a Western Europe, with which Romanian culture was in a permanent process of catching up, and a Europe situated to the south to the Danube, in relation to which the Romanian advance seemed to represent a glowing example.

Another representative of the “Slavic school” who belonged, however, to the twentieth century, was Petre P. Panaitescu. He interpreted “the Slavic stage” in the history of the Romanian principalities through a new thesis: he held that the Slavic influence on Romania did not lead to a distancing of the country from Western Europe but was in fact the result of a rupture with the West. Thanks to this thesis, he concluded with a positive assessment of the Slavic influence on Romanians as well as with focusing on a “Slavic Europe” whose linking elements were represented by the Slavic cultural language and the Orthodox Church.⁷³

⁷⁰ Bogdan, *Însemnătatea studiilor slave pentru români*, 11.

⁷¹ See also Bogdan, “Istoriografia română și problemele ei actuale,” 106; Mihăilă, “Ioan Bogdan (1864–1919),” 13.

⁷² Mârza, “Preocupările pentru slavi și slavonism ale Școlii Ardelene,” 357–66.

⁷³ Panaitescu, “‘Perioada slavonă’ la români și ruperea de cultura Apusului,” 13–29; *Introducere la istoria culturii românești*, 185–6.

Historians of the Interwar Period and “Europe”

The historians of the interwar period were primarily interested in decoding a solid national consciousness by concentrating on their own history. In this way, historical studies also started to participate in the great controversy between “traditionalists” and “modernists” that took hold of Romanian culture in the middle of the nineteenth century and reached a climax in the interwar years. On the one hand, “Westerners” represented by the literary critic Eugen Lovinescu asked for the synchronization with the West; on the other hand, others were more on the side of “autochthonous people” and highlighted the need to consider and develop specific traditions that were understood as a nationalist ideology.⁷⁴ In this sense, Nicolae Iorga is considered as the historian who promoted national Romanian elements. In Hitchins’ terms, “The final attributes of Romanian nationalism in Iorga’s conception consist in its being *Eastern* and *Christian*.” The professor from Bucharest considered that the essence of Romanianism was represented by Orthodox Christianity and “Orthodox consciousness.”⁷⁵

Despite all this, the tone that historians used in their debates about the relation between tradition and modernity was tempered. Nationalist views were more often heard in the case of philosophers, literary critics and theologians (such as Nae Ionescu, Nichifor Crainic, Lucian Blaga, Mircea Eliade or Mircea Vulcănescu). In contrast, historians were interested in debating the longevity of the ancient legacy (Vasile Pârvan), the significance of civilization and the Byzantine idea (Nicolae Iorga), the meaning of old ties with the Slavic world (Ion Bogdan, Petre P. Panaitescu), or the opening of the continent towards its classical center via the Black Sea (Gheorghe Brătianu).⁷⁶

The radicalization of the political situation both inside and outside Romania resulted in historians focusing on national aspects. Under the influence of international events, Gheorghe Brătianu focused on great world powers, the Soviet Union and Germany, even though he noted the crisis of the European political system.⁷⁷ His monograph on the origins of

⁷⁴ Hitchins, “East or West?,” 89–100; also cf. Höpken, “Europäisierung,” 91–108.

⁷⁵ Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought of Nicolae Iorga*, 49; Iorga, *Concepția românească a ortodoxiei*.

⁷⁶ Brătianu, *Une énigme et un miracle historique: le peuple roumain*. The book was translated into various languages and constantly republished. Brătianu, *Marea Neagră de la origini până la cucerirea otomană*; on Iorga, Panaitescu, and Bogdan, see the above mentioned works. For a brief overview, see also Duțu, *Ideea cu privire la Brătianu și confluențe istoriografice românești și europene*.

⁷⁷ Brătianu, *La Roumanie et l’U.R.S.S.*; and *La Roumanie et la crise du système politique européen*.

Romanians obviously promoted national interests but was also directed against their neighbors' revisionist intentions.⁷⁸ By the beginning of World War II, Gheorghe Brătianu and Constantin C. Giurescu also concentrated on the place of Romanians in Europe. In their view, from the ancient era until their times, the characteristic of the Romanian people had been to represent a borderline people "on the Eastern margin of Europe," a shield against the invasions of Eastern peoples (Huns, Tartars) or Southern peoples (Turks). In line with this, in the twentieth century, Romanians continued to be "an element of stability and order" as well as "the guardians of civilized Europe" against events with negative connotations such as the Russian revolution. Romania's post-World War I intervention against Béla Kun's Republic of Soviets—"an act of treason to European unity"—was characterized by Giurescu as "a great service brought to the European union." The outburst of World War I brought back Romania to the position of "an advanced guarding post of Europe against Asian barbarians." The war against the Soviet Union was now motivated by other reasons besides territorial claims:

The subjugation of the enemy from the East, which has always been not only the enemy of Europe but also of the entire civilized world based upon ideas of family, property and religion, [...] should solve Romanians' basic problem regarding their existence as a state and people.⁷⁹

This point of view would soon make way for another ideology.

Historical Studies and "Europe" during the Era of Communist Ideology: Overbidding the National

The political changes after the end of World War II led to the uniformization and ideologization of Romanian historical studies. As a result, Western Europe and Western European traditions were entirely excluded from the horizon of scholars' theorizations. Their politically and ideologically conditioned attention was vested in Eastern Europe, in the relation with the Soviet Union, and in its importance for the history of Romania. A decisive role in changing this direction was due to the historian Petre Constantinescu-Iași, who concentrated on the political and cultural relations

⁷⁸ Brătianu, *Une énigme et un miracle historique*, and Brătianu, *Marea Neagră de la origini pînă la cucerirea otomană*; Duțu, *Ideea cu privire la Brătianu*.

⁷⁹ C. C. Giurescu, *Die europäische Rolle des rumänischen Volkes*, 25–6.

between Eastern and Southern Slavs throughout history as a result of the political pressure arising after 1944. Thus, influences and contacts with Western Europe were omitted and, in case they were mentioned, negatively assessed.⁸⁰ In the spirit of the new historiography, the duty of ideologues like Mihail Ralea or Constantinescu-Iași was to free “the old historians from cosmopolite remains that distanced them from a just and scientific understanding of history.”⁸¹ This goal not only instituted the obligation of the entire field of historical studies to follow the methods of historical materialism, but also to promote an image of Europe that was necessarily defined by the Slavs, Russia and the Soviet Union.

The first stage of post-World War II Romanian historiography was strongly dominated by the Soviet Union and presented the European West as a world of imperialist exploitations that culminated in the twentieth century with the actions of Hitler’s Germany and, implicitly, with its effects on Romania.⁸² This perspective was gradually replaced by a more liberal approach during the first half of the 1960s,⁸³ which saw the resurgence of historians from before the establishment of the communist regime, such as Iorga, Xenopol and Kogălniceanu.⁸⁴ During this period, a rapprochement between topics of investigation and these latter people’s views occurred, which revamped the universal component of Romanians’ past based upon the argument that “Romanian” and “universal” were two notions that were largely synonymous without overlapping.⁸⁵ In light of this, in the early 1980s, scholars from the “A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History started to work on the project entitled “Romanians in Universal History” which used as reference source Nicolae Iorga’s book, *La place des Roumains dans l’histoire universelle* (*The Place of Romanians in Universal History*).

⁸⁰ Constantinescu-Iași, *Raporturi româno-bulgare*; Bezviconi, *Contribuții la istoria relațiilor româno-ruse*. Regarding the change of orientation, see many clues in the journal of Romanian Slavists, *Romanoslavica*.

⁸¹ Constantinescu-Iași, *Realizările istoriografiei române între anii 1945–1955*, 7.

⁸² See the works of Constantinescu-Iași, *Raporturi româno-bulgare*, 40, 47–50.

⁸³ On separate stages, also cf. Maner, “Zeitgeschichte Rumäniens als Politikum,” 388–408; Papacostea, “Captive Clio,” 181–208.

⁸⁴ See Pippidi and Iorga, *Nicolae Iorga l’homme et l’œuvre*.

⁸⁵ Ioan Agrigoroaiei et al., “Românii în istoria universală. Cîteva considerații” [Romanians in universal history. Some considerations], in Ioan Agrigoroaiei, Gheorghe Buzatu, Vasile Cristian (eds.), *Românii în istoria universală* [Romanians in universal history], vol. 1, (Iași: University of Iași, 1986), vii. Henceforth sprang several comprehensive anthologies; also cf. vol. II, 1 (1987); vol. III, 1 (1988). See also Cîndea, “Locul poporului român în istoria universală,” 254–64.

Despite all this, the new direction of historical studies as prescribed by the political leadership of the country and taken over by the majority of historians meant to highlight the Romanian national element. This change meant a new narrowing-down of the historians' horizon from the scope of Slavic Europe to that of overly marked and extrapolated ethno-national specifics. Historiography became especially interested in topics referring to the evolution of the national in Romanian history: the millennium-old history of Romanians, the thesis of continuity, uprisings presented as national revolts, the 1877 War of Independence, the union that had been people's desire for centuries on end and finally accomplished after the end of World War I, Romanians' contribution to liberating the motherland after "the revolution of social and national liberation" from 23 August 1944, the Romanian Communist Party led by Nicolae Ceaușescu, to the acme of independence struggles and national consciousness.⁸⁶ In line with this, during the last two decades before 1990, young scholars of contemporary times spoke of a symbiotic relation between "Europe" and "the nation."

This exclusive focus on national interests and their clear exaggeration were obvious in several works published in the 1970s and 1980s, such as *The History of Romania*,⁸⁷ *The History of the Romanian People*,⁸⁸ and *The History of Romanians*.⁸⁹ The climax of "national glory" and the servile fulfillment of the political desires of the Communist Party accepted as the end point of history in keeping with official ideology sprang from the presentation offered by three volumes written by Mircea Mușat and Ion Ardeleanu. In comparison to the classical pieces by Xenopol and Iorga, these volumes represented a clearly narrowed point of view by the disproportionate focus on national history. Supra-regional and regional European events were only briefly sketched as part of the migration of peoples during the first millennium and in point of highlighting some Western influences on the culture of the principalities. Meanwhile, some connection to *master narratives* from

⁸⁶ For instance, cf. *Unitatea și continuitatea în istoria poporului român* [Unity and continuity in the history of the Romanian people], edited by Dumitru Berciu (Bucharest: Academia R.S.R., 1968); *Desăvîșirea unificării statului național român* [Completing the union of the Romanian national state] (Bucharest: Academia R.S.R., 1968); Drăgan, *Noi, Tracii*; Pascu, *The Making of the Romanian Unitary National State 1918*. See also the historiographic overview of Berindei, "Realizări și perspective ale istoriografiei epocii moderne," 1377–1402. See extensive passages on the political sphere in Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania*; Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*.

⁸⁷ Constantinescu, et al., *Histoire de la Roumanie*.

⁸⁸ Oțetea, *The History of the Romanian People*.

⁸⁹ C. C. Giurescu, and D. C. Giurescu, *Geschichte der Rumänen*.

the interwar period was suggested to a certain degree thanks to the four-volume work by Constantin C. Giurescu entitled *Istoria Românilor* (*The History of Romanians*).⁹⁰ Additionally, one could understand the way in which Europe was conceptualized thanks to ideological-national tools included in a brief contribution on the mythological origins of the name of Europe in *Revista istorică* (*Historical Review*), a popular scientific journal with wide impact on the public. In his article from the journal, Dinu C. Giurescu divided the political history of Europe into five stages: the Greek domination, the Roman rule, the era of “the Christian ideology” in Medieval Europe, the Europe of nobles and imperialism (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries), and the formation of socialist states and the second industrial revolution (post-1945 contemporary history). Europe appeared as a multi-layered laboratory of experiences and revolutionary changes that culminated with the progress stage brought by socialism.⁹¹ The history of Europe thus appeared as a victorious path that had known the passage from “the Athenian democracy of a minority” to “the socialist democracy.”

Post-1989 “Europe”: A Mental Space

The 1989 political overthrow of the communist regime brought Europe back to the foreground of scientific and political debates.⁹² The widely debated concept of *Europe* had a double importance in the horizon of post-1989 Romanian public debates. On the one hand, it represented an economic benchmark because *Europe* was identified with capitalism, the movement that was capable of ensuring the material welfare that Eastern Europe had just discovered and claimed as a goal. In this sense, former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl also used this concept.⁹³ On the other hand, there was a cultural Europe characterized by its own history and philosophy,⁹⁴ by distinct benchmarks and values with echoes that could be identifiable in the East but that were not yet sufficiently assimilated.

Reflections on the simultaneous geographic and political circumscribing of the notion of *Europe* have gone beyond that. Andrei Marga lucidly holds that post-World War II “Europe” implies institutional and cultural

⁹⁰ C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*.

⁹¹ Giurescu, “Europa – ‘o parte a lumii îți va purta numele’,” 55.

⁹² See also Maner, “‘Europăismul’ în Rumänien,”; Marino, *Pentru Europa*, 11–33.

⁹³ Brucan, “Două Europe, nu una,” 43.

⁹⁴ Vasile Muscă, “Ce înseamnă Europa pentru un filozof?” [What does Europe mean for a philosopher?], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 47.

allegiance. By “Europe” he primarily understands Western Europe where a certain view of mankind predominates, one founded on the idea of each individual’s dignity, fundamental rights and personal autonomy. Corroborated with the European science, which is based on rationality and experience, these ideas constitute what has been called a “European tradition.”⁹⁵ “Europe” is thereby defined as a cultural-historical space at whose center a completely special civilization prospers, the Western one, imagined from outside as “a wonderful, incredible realm, a miraculous cornucopia, a paradisiac myth of consumer goods, [...] a model and ideal of welfare and economic development.”⁹⁶ This narrowing-down of the notion to a limited scope is completed by the emergence of a new concept, that of a *third Europe*, which after the 1989 political changes would comprise states from the former Soviet Union and NATO countries.⁹⁷

It is worth mentioning that for some authors, Europe or the European idea gets crystallized through its opposition to a contrary concept.⁹⁸ Europe is Christianity, looking towards Rome in opposition to Orthodoxy or Islam, or it is a liberal society and “a legally-constituted state” that designates a new relation to the state and society, which is opposed to the Eastern patriarchal, collectivist, and traditionalist model.⁹⁹ The contrast between the East and the West that has dominated the near past and present replaces the previous opposition from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries between the civilized South and the barbarian North. This new dichotomy was the construction of modern philosophers from Voltaire onwards and was to be completed in the nineteenth century with the concept of *Central Europe*, which distinguished a new European model within a distinct political and cultural framework.¹⁰⁰

Post-1989 Romanian intellectuals have shown a clear, straightforward orientation towards the civilizational models of Western Europe which have shaped the dreams and hopes of “ex Occidente lux,”¹⁰¹ the world situated East of the Iron Curtain, for decades. In light of this, Romania appears as an

⁹⁵ Marga, “Europa și specificul european,” 19–29, and *Filozofia unificării europene*, 21–56. Also cf. Neumann, “Ideea europeană” [The European idea], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 19–29.

⁹⁶ Marino, *Pentru Europa*, 14.

⁹⁷ Zamfirescu, *A treia Europă*, 8–11.

⁹⁸ Ștefan Borbély, “Eseu despre rapt” [Essay on rapture], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 93–104 refers to E. Todd, *L’invention de l’Europe* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹⁰⁰ Antohi, “Românii în 1995.” Also cf. Antohi, *Civitas imaginalis*.

¹⁰¹ Nițescu, *Sub zodia proletcultismului*, 386–92.

integral part of the Western European universe, a statute claimed on the basis of a past consistent with the present: just as it had functioned as “a bastion of Christian Europe,” “the gate of Christianity towards Islam,” or the “savior of Europe” in front of Turkish rule and the Tartars, Romania later functioned as a barrier in the face of the expansion of Soviet power.¹⁰² Obviously, most intellectuals understood Romania as a state that did not geographically and culturally belong to the Balkans or Eastern Europe (or the Community of Independent States),¹⁰³ and they officially solicited after 1992 the right of institutional integration in the European Union.¹⁰⁴

Thus, the idea that the national element has to be complemented by the European one has become a characteristic of Romanian debates.¹⁰⁵ It was in fact obvious from the pre-1989 period that a whole array of historians refused the nationalist illusion proposed by the regime. Alexandru Zub, Alexandru Duțu, Șerban Papacostea, Andrei Pippidi, Victor Neumann, Sorin Antohi, Lucian Boia and Bogdan Murgescu are outstanding historians who have not only kept the traditions of Romanian historical writing but have also expanded them and developed new historiographical ideas and theories, despite difficulties.

Making use of the liberalization of Romanian historical studies after the removal of Soviet influence in the 1960s and 1970s, Alexandru Zub brought back to public attention ignored or forbidden historians and their views.¹⁰⁶ In his description of the 1848 generation, Zub highlighted the

¹⁰² Zub, “Europa, o problemă deschisă” [Europe, an open question], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 134–5; Macovei, “Integrarea europeană,” 165; Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 171.

¹⁰³ Teodorescu, “O clarificare necesară: România este țară europeană!” [A necessary clarification: Romania is a European country!], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 161; cf. and Mungiu-Pippidi, “Vom alunga ‘Fantomele Balcanilor’?” [Will we drive away “the Balkan Ghosts”?], in *ibid.*, 229–32; and “Identitatea politică românească și identitatea europeană” [Romanian political identity and European identity], in *ibid.*, 281.

¹⁰⁴ In this sense, see also the contributions of Constantin Vlad, Nicolae Iordache, Mircea Nicolaescu and Gheorghe Bădescu on European integration, in the anthology V. Lipatti (ed.), *Integrarea europeană prioritate în politica externă a României* [European integration, A priority of Romania’s foreign politics] (Bucharest: Fundația România de Măine, 1996), 21–100. Also cf. Gabanyi and Zamfirescu, *România*, 176, 190–3.

¹⁰⁵ Ulici, “Național și european. Addenda la o polemică” [National and European. Addenda to a polemic], in Gabriel Andreescu (ed.), *Naționaliști, antinaționaliști... O polemică în publicistica românească* [Nationalists, antinationalists... A polemic in the Romanian press] (Iași: Polirom, 1996), 73.

¹⁰⁶ Apart from his monographs on Xenopol and Kogălniceanu, see Zub’s works on the historiography of the 1848 generation, his studies on Romanian historicism, or the his-

relation between “the national” and “the universal” and the openness to Western Europe which was not considered to represent a contradiction by mid-nineteenth century scholars such as Barițiu, Kogălniceanu, Asachi, Bărnețiu, Bălcescu, Papiu Ilarian or Hașdeu.¹⁰⁷ If Western Europe was a model to be followed for the 1848 generation, for Alexandru Zub European integration seemed to be the only viable option, while the post-World War II period was characterized as the time of difficult recoil: “It gave us the feeling of an ever more complete isolation and even an irreducible otherness.”¹⁰⁸ From the historian’s point of view, this “anti-Europe” that was born because of the Iron Curtain should be soon replaced by European unity understood as an evolution that could not be dismissed. For Zub, Europe is simultaneously a geographical space, a myth, a spiritual center, and a common market; it is a complex phenomenon whose emphasis is given by the cultural dimension. Despite this dimension extended to the entire European geographical space, the historian honestly and regretfully notes the difference between the discourse of the East and the West: while the East euphorically claims its affiliation to Europe, the skeptical West inclines towards a restrictive definition of Europeanness.¹⁰⁹

In light of this, the oeuvre of historian Alexandru Duțu has centered upon analyzing European influences on Romanian culture. The historian holds that starting with the sixteenth century, there were three centuries of Slavic, Greek and finally Western (German, French or Italian) influences which interspersed with autochthonous ideas and enriched the Romanian culture by giving it “an originality which is located at the crossroads between Central-Eastern Europe and Southern Europe, between the Levantines’ world and the region of the Adriatic Sea.”¹¹⁰ Duțu, director of the Institute of South-Eastern European Studies in Bucharest, considered that this capacity to assimilate various influences represents a defining Euro-

toriography of the interwar period. Zub, *A scrie și a face istorie; Biruit-au gândul; Pe urmele lui Vasile Pârvan; Istorie și istorici în România interbelică*.

¹⁰⁷ Zub, *A scrie și a face istorie*, 91–8.

¹⁰⁸ Zub, “Europa, o problemă deschisă,” in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ Zub, “În căutarea Europei” [In search of Europe], in Zub, *Chemarea istoriei. Un an de răspântie în România postcomunistă* [The call of history. A turning point year in Post-Communist Romania] (Iași: Junimea, 1997), 308; “Perspectiva integrării” [The perspective of integration], in *ibid.*, 273–6; “O strategie culturală” [A cultural strategy], in *ibid.*, 216–20; “Speranța noastră” [Our hope], in *ibid.*, 92–6; “Discursul european între euforie și scepticism” [European discourse between euphoria and skepticism], in Marino, *Revenirea în Europa*, 33–8.

¹¹⁰ Duțu, *Sinteză și originalitate în cultura română*, 246.

pean trait of Romanian culture. For him, just as for Nicolae Iorga, the region inhabited by Romanians is the cultural core of spiritual Europe. Starting from here, Duțu finally focused on nineteenth- and twentieth-century European culture, of which Romanian culture was part.¹¹¹ In his last book, Duțu devoted himself to the history of the European idea,¹¹² starting from the premise that beyond geographical limitations there is an already-constituted European identity which religion, Christian churches and the Ottoman peril have favored throughout the passage of time. Common cultural elements that can be identified in the philosophical, moral or religious fields have left a clear mark on the Romanian intellectual elite. The historian notes that, at present:

[...] the past tells us that we belong to the great European family; we have systematized our thoughts in the light of Greek philosophy, we have assimilated as much as possible “the great mystery of Christianity,” learning that the law of love not only comprises our own people but also “the others.” Our Europe is a world to which we aspire and which has endured in the thoughts of our country’s intellectuals.¹¹³

His comparative analysis of the idea of Europe is motivated by the fact that each person is guided by the desire to have “an extended motherland,” hence following “an improvement ideal.”

As in the case of many of his predecessors, in Duțu’s representation, *Europe* is a notion defined by its delimitation from other ideas. One adds to the dichotomies distinguishing between Greeks and Persians or between *res publica christiana/res publica letteraria* and the Ottoman world, a new differentiation between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. In this sense, Duțu notes that there is not only “a European idea” but also a “European problem,” which consists in the Western Europeans’ oscillating attitude between condescension of and indifference towards South-Eastern Europe:

For the majority of the Western intellectuals, the Balkan world acquires a “European” character when it adopts Western forms and ideas: the rest seems to belong to a world that has become stuck on an outmoded view.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Duțu, *Romanian Humanists and European Culture*, 190; *Cultura română în civilizația europeană modernă*, 244; and *Modele, imagini, priveliști*, 212 sq.

¹¹² Duțu, *Ideea de Europa*.

¹¹³ Ibid., 22. The already-mentioned anthology, *Revenirea în Europa*, contains contributions by many intellectual personalities from public life including Andrei Marga, Andrei Pleșu, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Sorin Antohi, Gabriel Andreescu, Octavian Paler, Alexandru Paleologu a.s.o.

¹¹⁴ Duțu, *Ideea de Europa*, 58.

In one of his main works, Duțu concludes in the spirit of Nicolae Iorga's historical thought, that Romania has played a central role in cultural encounters and has never left the orbit of European culture, therefore having a specific profile that might be very useful: "The Romanian example could offer useful suggestions to the present-day European construction."¹¹⁵ Among the specific cultural values of Romanians within a common Europe, not least of all, Duțu identified Orthodoxy and its model of temperance and inner wisdom.¹¹⁶

Andrei Pippidi, director of the Romanian Institute for Contemporary History in Bucharest, is also interested in the European space as not only a geographical area but also as a spiritual notion and a mental space. From a historical point of view, Pippidi notices an ambiguous attitude to Europe coming from the East of Europe; on the one hand, there is Christian solidarity in the fight against the Turks, on the other hand, there is a sense of abandonment that this part of the continent has felt in relation to the allegedly advanced West. In this problematic context, as Iorga's student, Pippidi takes over the Byzantine tradition of the "myth and political model" in order to sketch a European framework whose future is conceived as a federal-based united Europe without tones of domination, and in which the "common house" represented by *Europe* should offer to each of its members the necessary framework for development and progress.¹¹⁷

Europe as "a symbolical idea" and concept has been especially investigated by the historian Victor Neumann. In his view, Europe is first and foremost a space of interactions, of cultural interpenetration in which rigid limitations are mental constructs that do not correspond to real life. This characteristic of the European world was especially dominant in the Century of Lights when the communication between the continent's elites led to the formation of a genuine *Homo Europaeus*, the result of an exceptional cultural blend:

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 63.

¹¹⁶ Duțu, "Europäisches Bewußtsein und orthodoxe Anhänglichkeit," in Harald Heppner, Grigorios Larentzakis (eds.), *Das Europa-Verständnis im orthodoxen Südosteuropa* (Graz: Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung, Reinische Friedrich Wilhelms Universität Bonn, 1996), 142.

¹¹⁷ Pippidi, *Tradiția politică bizantină în Țările Române în secolele XVI–XVIII*, 15; and "Europa și România: conflictul unor imagini" [Europe and Romania: The conflict of some images], in Pippidi, *Rezerva de speranță*, 145–8. "Europe" as a myth in Romanian history is also the topic of a book by the well-known historian Lucian Boia, *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, 11–22, 177–94, 292.

I have considered the European continent as a single spiritual organism, a unitary formation at whose birth both the East and the West participated, both the Orthodox Balkan world and the Catholic one.¹¹⁸

At the same time, however, Neumann does not conceive Europe as an undifferentiated cultural-spiritual space. Instead, he points out its specificities and differences especially in the case of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Overall, his approach is an integrative one, the space of Central and South-Eastern Europe being analyzed from the perspective of a European conscience founded on the basis of common cultural values and historical experiences generative of cooperation and solidarity.¹¹⁹

Sorin Antohi proposes a new phrase for understanding European identity, that of a “reticular identity” which should replace the notion of national identity in the definition of the future common Europe.¹²⁰ According to the historian, this “reticular identity” would be born through both spatial and mental deterritorialization, an identitarian development which exists not only for the intellectual elite of the society, but also for numerous groups of people that have emigrated from the East to the West of Europe.¹²¹ Another topic to which Antohi has dedicated his studies is that of “the self-portrait of Romanianness,” in view of including Romanians within a symbolical geography of Europe.¹²² The historian proposes a recuperation of the Romanian collective mental within the “real geo-cultural” background, which would relativize both “autochthonous chimeras” and Westernizing phantasms (in this latter sense, Antohi speaks of “geo-cultural bovarism”). The solution would be their reunion in a third type of discourse, a dialogue of the compromise “between reality and fiction, between history and utopia.”¹²³ Yet, when Antohi does speak of Western people and the autochthonous population, he refers to a Romanian tradition that goes back to the 1848 revolutionaries and comprises the movement opposed to Semănătorism (the Idyllist movement), especially

¹¹⁸ Neumann, *Tentația lui homo europaeus*, 11.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 23–31. See also Theodorescu, B., “Solidaritate și antagonism în Sud-Estul european. O evoluție contradictorie” [Solidarity and antagonism in South-Eastern Europe. A contradictory evolution], in idem, *Europa noastră și noi*, 21–9; “Europe de l’Est – Europe de l’Ouest – la diversité d’une identité,” in Theodorescu, *Regards d’historien*, 11–45.

¹²⁰ Antohi, “Europa Comunitară,” 82–5. Also see Antohi, *Civitas imaginalis*; Macovei, “Între Occident și Orient,” 238–9.

¹²¹ Antohi, “Europa Comunitară,” 85–6.

¹²² Antohi, “Românii în 1995,” 261–72.

¹²³ Ibid., 264.

the interwar traditionalism under the form of “Romanianism” and “Orthodoxy.”

In the historian’s view, both Westerners and autochthonous people make reference to Western Europe, which they attempt to copy either by systematic imitation, in the case of the former, or by *perversa imitatio*, an autochthonism which “imitates the fossil traces of Western cultural myths and ideologies.”¹²⁴ The analysis of these discourses therefore excludes both the purely political motivations of the historians that uphold them or the economic ones that would target the improvement of the country’s chances in the competition for limited resources, an idea well pointed out by Dieter Segert.¹²⁵ All the proposed theories reveal a deeper reason: the desire for Romanian culture and civilization to back out from its geopolitical isolation alongside its desire to fulfill its historical destiny, which is thought and imagined to be a European one.

Conclusions

The notion of *Europe* in Romanian historical studies comprises geographical, political, and cultural meanings that are not separate but interconnected. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the notion of *Europe* represented a handful of aspirations that supported the common Christian foundation. A century later, the cultural dimension was left behind, and the European political view took center stage and led to the birth of national states, which became a model to which the countries that later entered the scene of modernity also aspired. In the nineteenth century and particularly in the twentieth century, the concept became fundamental for identity discourses. In the history of Romanians—both for the champions of European integration (“the Westerners”) and for the skeptics (“the autochthonous”)—Europe first and foremost means Christianity, civilization and the West. The former consider themselves to be European, and aspire to as closely as possible adopt the positively valued model of the EU; the others start from the same meaning of the notion, which they later reject or consciously develop into their own coined concept. Debates often start with the description of European events, and later focus on central

¹²⁴ Ibid., 267; Antohi, *Civitas imaginalis*, 239–52.

¹²⁵ Dieter Segert, “Institutionalisierung der Demokratie am balkanischen Rand Osteuropas,” in Wolfgang Merkel, et al., *Systemwechsel 2, Die Institutionalisierung der Demokratie* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1996), 130.

issues such as including Romania's own history into the history of Europe. The consciousness of being located in a liminal space "between the East and the West" has contributed to the great controversy between "tradition" and "modernity" in search of a European identity. On the part of Romanian culture, the solution was conditioned by Nicolae Iorga's view, whose concept of the *Byzantium* reminded Europe that it should be conscious of its roots, recognize them, and rediscover itself through them. All the delimitations of Romanian historiography¹²⁶ have not had any other goal than to highlight the nuances of the concept and the reality of a common cultural identity that can no longer be ignored in the future.

Even though the historians' views have changed depending on the political penchant, many theories have also focused on South-Western-European regions or on the rapports between Eastern, Western and Southern Europe. Particularly after the political overthrow of communism at the end of 1989, Romanian historiography has resumed the discourse that was interrupted in 1948. Recuperation now becomes necessary, and Europe figures as such a frequent topic of public debate that one can even talk of an ideology of Europeanism. By this, I understand the imitation of the West and Western modernization, more precisely the recuperation of development based upon a Western model.¹²⁷ After 1989, the notion of *Europe* has been almost always connected with the idea of the European Union, hence the interpretation that only someone who belongs to the latter can truly belong to Europe. The basis of this opinion has been the economic superiority and the high living standard of the West by comparison to the East, without ignoring, however, the political or cultural signification that confers on Europe the attribute of being a cradle of philosophy, art, science and, in broad terms, culture and civilization.

One can thus identify several kinds of discourses centered upon the new pole of interest represented by the European Union. The political-propagandist discourse proposes a real integration and the use of Western models, while the cultural discourse has internalized the skeptics' fears and opposes to Europe an ethno-linguistic, mono-cultural identity, which escalates in intolerance and tensions. To this latter discourse one can add that of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which uses as point of departure

¹²⁶ Western European representations negate that such an identity can represent a foundation of a "cultural Europe." Cf. Thomas Buchheim, "Einigung oder Assimilation? Zwei Bilder von europäischer Integration," in *Europa und Europabilder*, Studium Generale der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg (Heidelberg: Winter), 9–23.

¹²⁷ Cf. Maner, "'Europäismus' in Rumänien," 147–70; and *Multiple Identitäten*.

Nicolae Iorga's Byzantine concept and elements of the cultural discourse in order to foreground an exclusive religious component.

In conclusion, over the last two centuries, Romanian historiography has described Europe as a supra-ordered, stable reality having a unitary culture. The statute of the Romanian principalities and later Romania has been that of an intermediary "last bastion" between the civilized world and the enemy coming from the East or the South. The image of Europe has become a characteristic presence of historical writings ever since the second half of the nineteenth century, starting with an intensified focus on national and territorial sovereignty. Europe has become an abstract conceptual tool intensely used for defending national sovereignty and for maintaining the state's borders. The post-1989 discourse very clearly visualizes the institutional complex of the European Union in the background of the concept of *Europe*. Only time can tell how the relation between Europe and the national state will develop in the future and if Europe will set itself free from the constraints of national concepts.

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Images of Europe – Images of Romania (1945/1948–2008)

Armin Heinen

Bucharest, January 2007: A Distant Country's Ceremonies of Adherence to the European Union

According to Wilfried Loth's theory,¹ the European Union has a duty to try and solve four problems, namely:

1. keeping peace on the continent;
2. the German question;
3. the less than optimal economic performance of national-state order;
4. European states' loss of power and competitive capacity in the face of great Western powers.

To these one could add the processes of democratization in Eastern Europe, which are an expression of cooperation and European integration. The expansion of the European Union from January 2007—when Romania and Bulgaria were admitted to the European community—is a good example foregrounding the above-mentioned problems. At the time, the EU wanted to ensure peace in its Eastern regions, stabilize labile democracies, reinvigorate the economic power of the new member states, and facilitate their access to attractive markets. In this sense, Western politicians' endeavor to highlight reciprocal advantages was completely justified. Yet, the figures regarding reciprocal interests did not manage to convince a large part of the European public opinion. In the fall of 2006, 42 percent of those questioned were against the territorial enlargement of the EU.² No other territorial ex-

¹ Loth, "Beiträge der Geschichtswissenschaft zur Deutung der Europäischen Integration," 87–106.

² The 2006 Eurobarometer, http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006_Eurobarometer_Zukunft_EU.pdf (last accessed 23. 01. 2008).

pansion of the European Community had generated so much skepticism as the integration of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007.

The reason for the above-mentioned skepticism was represented by the divergence between the political project of a united Europe and the intention to merge together the European civilization. In their imaginary representation of Europe, the Westerners had not integrated Romania or Bulgaria. Instead, they associated the two countries with the “Balkans,” a location of disorder, emotional excess and a penchant for violence. From their different perspective, Romanians and Bulgarians perceived their countries’ accession to the EU as an extremely attractive event. Over 70 percent of the Romanians questioned were in favor of EU accession.³ Yet, Romania’s integration to the EU did not mean their arrival in the European country of their birth as dreamed of by the 1989 revolutionaries. Romania had never been so “Balkan” as before and immediately after the revolution, an observation that is valid from a Western perspective. More than ever before, at the end of the twentieth century, Romanians saw Europe as an enviable and coveted space, a so-called “New World” which was inaccessible and distant.

It is also worth noting that political integration has been different from cultural integration in the case of South-Eastern European states. European representations of Romania and Romanian representations of Europe are not convergent. Until recently, the Western discourse did not develop a topic that included Romania as a part of its own construction. On the other hand, the Romanian discourse did not create an image that would identify autochthonous creation as a European one.⁴ The Europeanization of Romania is therefore a project for the future, one that implies a trans-border and partly conflicting dialogue.

At first sight, the result is not surprising. In her studies on the “Balkan space” of the twentieth century, Maria Todorova has invoked continuities as actually subsuming discontinuities of representation.⁵ Göran Therborn has foregrounded the similarities between socio-historical evolutions from Western Europe and Eastern Europe and has therein found the chance of cultural integration.⁶ However, neither of the two interpretations is con-

³ Samson, *The Cultural Integration Model and European Transformation*, 211.

⁴ For a thorough examination of the difficulties that arise in determining Romania’s position in the mental geography of Europe as carried out by Romanian intellectuals from the eighteenth century onwards, see Antohi, “Romania and the Balkans.” This is where one can also find a bibliography on this topic.

⁵ Todorova, *Die Erfindung des Balkans*.

⁶ Therborn, *Die Gesellschaften Europas*.

vincing. History can use several variants and alternatives besides those suggested by “grand narratives.” My analysis will be based on details about the history of proximity and distancing; it will sustain the consolidation and volatilization of representations, and will develop a new idea about the future. For the period between 1945 and 2008 I will distinguish several stages characteristic of the distancing and rapprochement between Romania and Europe by examining three main dimensions: the political sphere, intellectuals’ reactions, and the process of anchoring symbolical geography. There are well-grounded reasons explaining the antinomy between representations of Romania and of Europe, and people’s behaviors have been deeply marked by these. They also compete with other interpretations. Cultural integration does not occur by the replacement of existent models of interpretation, but by their pluralization and by the capacity to confidently act within a fractured social order.

The Image of Romania as a Familiar European Other

When Winston Churchill presented his well-known speech from 5 March 1946 in Fulton, Missouri, and spoke about the Iron Curtain that the Soviet Union had drawn over the East of Europe, he developed a possible approach one could apply to the image of the continent and its future. Martin Marcussen and Klaus Roscher identified five competing concepts of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s:⁷

1. the liberal-nationalist variant, according to which Europe was made up of the cooperation of various national states;
2. the idea that Europe appeared as a cultural community from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains;
3. the representation of Europe as a third power between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist US;
4. the idea of modern Europe as a part of the West;
5. the idea of a Christian Western Europe.

During those years, it was not clear how Western politics would have to react to changes occurring to the East of the Elba River, and one did not need special intellectual maneuvers in order to limit Eastern European

⁷ Marcussen and Roscher, “Europe,” 325–57. A general description of concepts on 1945 Europe can be found in Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*, 105–30; the volume also comprises a comprehensive bibliography.

people's attention to Western Europe. The Christian West could easily identify with Charles the Great's Empire, and modern Europe ended in the 1920s at the borders with Poland and Hungary. As a third power, Europe comprised a similarly structured area that separated the agrarian states of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe from North-Western industrialized Europe. The liberal-nationalist variant could not find in the states situated to the East of the Elba River an independent partner for discussions. The only idea that was left was that of a Europe understood as a cultural community, a representation that was daily disclaimed by the political praxis of Eastern Europe.

The Return to Old Europe

Many intellectuals considered that the shift of the cultural-political center around the US meant Europe's loss of influence; they interpreted this as a sign of a civilizing egalitarianism. The decline of Europe in the global economy was obvious at the time; hence access to colonies became clearly imperiled. At the same time, the inner rupture of Europe was self-evident and, in comparison to the US, Europe's economic stagnation had been more than obvious. Under the circumstances, intellectuals found refuge in extolling high European culture and celebrating the tastes of the dominant social classes. Radio and television emphasized their formative role. From this perspective, Eastern Europe and particularly South-Eastern Europe played no role whatsoever.⁸

The Westernization of the Native Country

At the beginning of the 1950s, the majority of people from Western Europe saw Europe as an extremely heterogeneous structure, which was at best united thanks to the expansion of American culture. Hartmut Kaelble, for instance, held that, from a socio-political point of view, the combination of countries from the European Community of Coal and Steel resembled a possible confederation that was to include Albania, Yugoslavia, Italy and Switzerland. The time's thought was dominated by the role of the local space. Few people talked the language of the neighboring country, and many Europeans only found relevant the events from distant

⁸ Kaelble, *Europäer über Europa*, 136.

colonies.⁹ South-Eastern Europe nevertheless changed into a multicolored mosaic. After emigrants from the Romanian mainstream and the Romanian minority groups settled down in the West, Romania was out of the European visual horizon, and adopted an eerie Stalinist dictatorship, becoming a *terra incognita* totally different from countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia in which associations of exiles from Germany were constantly remembered and engaged with.¹⁰

A New Western Europe. The Political Opening towards Eastern Europe

After the Vietnam War, Westerners' view of the US changed. Europe's economy was prosperous while the US dollar was under pressure. Despite all adversities, the European Community became a success story in which the Brits also wanted to take part. French President Charles de Gaulle deplored Europe's dependence on the US and hoped for the resumption of connections with the states of Eastern Europe. He called Ceaușescu's Romania "a dictatorship of development" which had achieved a combination of tradition with modernity and of rural self-sufficiency with an industrial life-style. This state of facts corresponded to his concept of a Europe made up of national states from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains.¹¹ The German federal government had a different motivation for its policy towards Eastern Europe. This was tributary to their perspective regarding the supposed autonomy of Romanian foreign politics that included the country within the European discourse of expansion. In this way Romania also made it to positive headlines in the European press.

The Europe of Intellectuals and the Interest in "Socialist Modernization"

In the 1950s, intellectuals reacted to Europe's political, economic and cultural crises and manifested a clear penchant for civic values. In the 1960s, they directed their attention to the critical-liberal discourse of American origins, which they further developed on their own terms. They considered

⁹ Kaelble, "Die gesellschaftliche Seite des europäischen Modells der transnationalen Integration."

¹⁰ Schwertfeger, "Rumänien – vergessene Volksdemokratie," 292–9, particularly 292.

¹¹ Durandin, *Istoria Românilor*, 318.

the Western European space as the birthplace of modernity, a haven of democracy, a locale of social compromise. They were certain that they lived in the best possible world and that their mission was to continuously develop their own society.¹² Under these circumstances, the concept of the third power stimulated a new version of social organization, which had at its disposal the possible path of development for countries outside the European nucleus. This fact was beneficial for Romania too, a country which was apparently following the path of modernization.¹³

The Experience of Living in the West and the Curious Gaze towards the Romanian Coast of the Black Sea

During the economic upsurge of the 1960s, Westerners' life style became similar from one state to another. Commerce, tourism, pop music, cuisine, and an ever more extended education brought together Western societies and resulted in the emergence of a clearly-delimited social space in which the concept of *Western Europe* was empirically grounded. Europe now formed itself as a socio-cultural space that went far beyond the borders of the European Community, but had the Elba River as an endpoint.¹⁴ Being open to Western tourism, Romania found the occasion to acquire a place on Europe's mental map, even though this was a marginal one. What the Westerners found in South-Eastern Europe confirmed their distant and ancient kinship to Romanians. Consequently, the Black Sea shore became a vacation destination for Western Europeans.

The "Mittel-Europenization" of Europe in the 1980s and 1990s and the Consequences of State Transformations in South-Eastern Europe

The Yugoslavia Effect

Romania was completely isolated from the international world during the 1980s.¹⁵ This happened as a result of Nicolae Ceaușescu's politics. In contrast, Russia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia showed their openness to Western arguments and offered hope for a new peaceful and united Europe. In his famous ten-point plan from 28 November 1989, German

¹² Kaelble, *Europäer über Europa*, 219.

¹³ Cf., for instance, Guha, "Rumania as a Development Model," 297–323.

¹⁴ Kaelble, "Die gesellschaftliche Seite"; Kaelble, *Sozialgeschichte Europas*; Schmidt-Gernig, "Gibt es eine 'europäische Identität'?", 163–216.

¹⁵ Gilberg, *Nationalism and Communism in Romania*, 199.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl underlined the existence of a direct connection between German reunification and the accession to the European Community of pro-reform states from the Eastern part of the continent.¹⁶ He was definitely not referring to Romania yet, when the December 1989 revolution led to the end of the Communist dictatorship¹⁷ and the appeal to solidarity with “the united European people” also reached South-Eastern Europe. Italy, Belgium and France offered an important amount of support. Germans remembered the important minorities therein who could speak German. Then, when the West read the first reports about nationalist persecutions in Romania, when TV screens broadcast scenes of miners beating intellectuals in Bucharest’s University Square and the first convoys with aids reached Romania’s overcrowded orphan asylums and hospitals, the Western image of the Balkans burst out.¹⁸

On 26 June 1991, the Serbian army attacked Slovenia because the latter had separated itself from the Yugoslav Federation. This gave rise to the wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. During the meeting of the European Council on 25–26 March 1999, NATO started an air offensive against Serbia. Seven months later, the EU invited Romania, Bulgaria and other states to start negotiations in view of future adherence. It seemed that peace, the stabilization of fragile democracies, and the control of national upsurges from South-Eastern Europe could only be contained through an open offer towards cooperation that would prevent a new exodus of the region’s population. The political offer aimed at “taming” the Balkan region by cultivating the perspective of European integration and also highlighting the discrepancy between institutional politics and political culture.

The West’s Movement towards the East and the “Balkanization” of South-Eastern Europe

During the 1990s, German, French and Belgian intellectuals dissociated themselves from the idea of a Euro-Atlantic civilization and were in search of a cultural basis for an extended Europe that would also include states from Central and South-Eastern Europe. Their basic stock included the disintegration of the Soviet Empire, social differentiation from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia,¹⁹ the economic modernization of states

¹⁶ http://www.kas.de/upload/dokumente//2008/6020/zehn_punkte.pdf (last accessed 06. 12. 2012).

¹⁷ Heinen, “Der Tod des Diktators und die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit,” 168–84.

¹⁸ Kissau, “Ceaușescu, Dracula und Waisenhäuser?,” 44–55.

¹⁹ Baga and Tatur, “Rumäniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 114–35.

from South-East Asia, and especially the conservative tendency of the US, which reinvented itself by means of missionary emigrants. To the pretense of a global civic-religious order, European intellectuals opposed the concept of an open, dynamic, social Europe. Max Weber's old question was: What sequence of circumstances could have led to the appearance of Western cultural phenomena that finally achieved universal significance?

In one of his essays, Richard Löwenthal showed that the nucleus of European modernism was made up of the Protestant-Catholic part of Europe including Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary and excluding South-Eastern Europe and Russia.²⁰ Löwenthal claimed that the basic traits of the modern world were formed in this region and that the specific European dynamics consisted in the association of non-Byzantine Christianity with German-Celtic cultural elements. Unlike the Byzantine Christological speculation, the values of Western Christianity would be represented by the early formation of a sense of moral belonging to the earthly world. The Western world would be characterized by the repression of the magic elements of faith in favor of reason, a term for which there was no equivalent in Byzantine milieus and later in Russian milieus. According to the same author, Western Christianity would go beyond traditional social barriers and would replace them with the idea of a voluntarily assumed society which transcended blood relations and united free people and slaves, Jews and pagans. In this way, the powerful position of rightful order was highlighted. Finally, the relation between prayer and work, or *ora et labora*, characterizing the Western world seemed to have no correspondent in the Byzantine sphere whose spirituality was detached from this world.

Not only Richard Löwenthal perceived the border with Orthodoxy as the decisive cultural separating line of Europe, but also the scholar of the Middle Ages Peter Segl. The latter analyzed the differences between state and church in the Byzantine world and compared them with the Western world, showing that the separation of state powers and the degree of individual freedoms had followed a different evolution in the two areas.²¹ At the same time, Central European intellectuals claimed their region's participation in the creation and development of a modern Europe.²² For instance, they made themselves heard loud and clear through their initiative

²⁰ Löwenthal, "Die Gemeinsamkeiten des geteilten Europa," 43–65.

²¹ Segl, "Europas Grundlegung im Mittelalter," 21–43.

²² Antohi, "România în anii '90," 292–316, particularly 295–7; Todorova, *Die Erfindung des Balkans*, 201. See also a summary of Anneli Ute Gabanyi's speech, in Henkel, "'Ist der Ruf erst ruiniert...,'" 101–5; Petrescu, "Eastern Europe," 232–7.

for civil rights in Chart 77 from Czechoslovakia, the Catholic-Socialist trade-union federation of “Solidarity” from Poland, or the confident representatives of reformed Hungary. They appealed to human rights and a common history of values, admitting that there was a totally different constellation in South-Eastern Europe. Western intellectuals and Central European erudite thinkers thus created a picture of a dynamic, Western-Christian, Enlightened Europe that was distinct from the Orthodox, Byzantine-Ottoman space of the past.

Europe’s Day-to-Day Experience Face to Face with Romania

When borders disappeared in 1989/1990, Westerners took journeys to the Czech Republic (Marienbad), Hungary (the Balaton Lake), or Poland (Cracow) and they made on-the-spot experiments about the successful economic story of a society ready to face up to market demands. Romania’s (and Bulgaria’s) situation was different. The German minority left the native country because of corruption and poverty. Mass media wrote about orphans that were forsaken and hungered at the Northern Railway Station in Bucharest. All these events further contributed to the labeling of Romania as a certainly distant Balkan country but not one totally foreign to Europe; it was rather a shameful stain on the continent.

From “Poor Asylum” to “Tiger-State”—Cultural Distancing and Economic Achievements of the European Integration

Even if over the last few years—following Romania’s accession to the EU—the image of the country has changed and TV programs have shown its beautiful landscape or have made public the success story of the “German” mayor from Sibiu, the decisions to locate the Continental multinational company in Timișoara and Nokia in Cluj have been perceived by the West as instances of disloyal competition which brings about the peril of exporting poverty. Meanwhile, hardly anyone discusses the fact that relocation of production corresponds to the logic of the European domestic market, and the unexpected success describes the trajectory of Romania’s continental integration.

Recently, Romania has begun to be seen in light of a new image. It has been considered a “tiger-state,” a very attractive market that deserves to be visited by business investors.²³ The Wikipedia site²⁴ (as well as other

²³ In this sense, type the keyword “Romania tiger-state” on the Google search engine and see the numerous results that appear.

²⁴ <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rum%C3%A4nien>.

sources²⁵) describes the Romanian economy as one of “the most strongly privatized mass economies of the world” while Western Europe is seen as a place of socio-political compromise. Romania appears to be located in the East rather than “the ordered West,” being a tiger-state that does not belong to the European Citadel. It continues to look like an unfamiliar, strange country whose touristic attractions are enjoyed by very few educated people or frugal consumers from Eastern Germany.

Europe Seen as Difference. The New Jerusalem: Moscow

Until 1944/1947, Romania’s politics had always looked towards the West, either towards Paris and London or Berlin and Rome. Moscow had never been perceived as an alternative, at least starting with the nineteenth century when boyars’ sons revolted against the Russian domination. This changed after the Soviet occupation of the country in 1944. Romania’s new leaders applied the reform in the spirit of Soviet Communism. They had done away with the previous elites whose place had been taken by a leading class made up of startups and people from the margin of society, whose only legitimacy consisted in their renouncing to the past and adopting “a new Jerusalem.”²⁶ Given that the country’s politics had always known radical changes and had cultivated external, outside forms without benefiting from a solid political culture (as nineteenth-century conservatives had also noted), Romania became a constituent part of the Eastern bloc, and its people’s resistance did not reach beyond the rural milieu.²⁷

Intellectual Coordination

After the end of World War II, the orientation towards Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism started.²⁸ Those who held power cleared universities of the old faculty members and obliged students to participate in courses on Marxism-Leninism. Learning Russian became part of the educational

²⁵ https://www.sparkasse.at/sPortal/sparkasseat_de_0198_ACTIVE/Downloads/Treasury/.Emissionen/Eckdaten_Bedingungen/20061019_FL_AT0000A034N4.pdf.

²⁶ Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 269; Baga and Tatur, “Rumâniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 120. On the political foundation of the image of Europe in Romania from 1944 onwards, see also Onișoru, “Von Kalten Krieg zur friedlichen Koexistenz,” 253–72.

²⁷ Heinen, “Überwältigung – Verstrickung – Sprachlosigkeit,” 509–18.

²⁸ On the coordination of historical studies, see Zub, *Orizont închis. Istoriografia română sub communism*, 61–71; for broader ideas, see Müller, *Politică și istoriografie în România*.

canon and curriculum, and the history textbook edited by Mihail Roller exalted the support Romanians had obtained from the Soviet Union. Socialist Realism dominated Romanian art and literature. Significantly, it located the rural basis of Romania on the same level as a new industrial beginning.²⁹ The former followers of the legion of “Archangel Michael”—those who did not end in lagers or prisons and only had to repeat what they had always preached—had not made the slightest effort to look towards the East. In celebrating the authenticity of their archaic Orthodox faith, they referred to something completely different.

Orientalizing the Village

The Orthodox Church was one of the institutions that took advantage of the new times. It obtained the unique right to represent all Romanian believers, both the Orthodox and the United (Greek-Catholics). The state guaranteed a regular payment of the Orthodox priests' salaries and it simultaneously implemented measures against the other Churches. As a counter-service, Romanian Orthodoxy had to turn its gaze towards Moscow: this was not too difficult a task, nor did it mean going beyond an unacceptable situation.³⁰

The lives of the masses were strongly marked by “Oriental” influences. In the countryside, the state destroyed archaic social structures by promoting certain people and being unfair to others. The peasants' resistance was exhausting and demoralizing and it expanded over a long period of time.³¹ As time went by, even the initial hopes regarding the Americans' interventions were gone.³² What loomed out instead was a vague promise about the social ascent of all those who got involved with the new system. Especially Romanian youngsters of the times were fascinated by the plan to modernize Romania through complete coordination.

The Return to an Intermediary Area. The Lure of the Concept of Europe

The situation changed at the end of the 1950s. Bucharest gave up its unilateral orientation towards Moscow and took up the overture signals that the West was sending its way. Contact with France, Germany and the US could help Romania overcome its deficit in point of technical progress; it could

²⁹ Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 287; Chroust, “Wo liegt Rumänien?,” 70–85.

³⁰ Durandin, *Istoria Românilor*, 279.

³¹ Sauer, *Modernisierung und Tradition*, 69; Verdery, *Dialogic Collectivization*.

³² Onişoru, “Vin americanii,” 299–314; *Vom kalten Krieg*, 251–67.

increase its freedom of action in foreign policy and ensure a promising atmosphere inside the country. The regime responded affirmatively to the external call for de-Stalinization.³³ After winning the fight against oldivism, replacing rival communist forces and stifling the peasants' opposition against forced collectivization, the state consolidated itself and passed on to the liberation of political prisoners.³⁴ National inclusion replaced the idea of class struggle since authorities considered they had eliminated social contrasts.³⁵ The policy of social security benefits was extremely popular.³⁶ The regime promised jobs to qualified people from among the bourgeois and a certain freedom of action to intellectuals; this gave rise to hopes for a future in which the country would quickly evolve thanks to its liminal position between the East and the West and fulfill its dream of national glory in a Europe made up of motherlands. Within this line of thought, the failure of the Communist Party during the 1920s and 1930s was considered to have been the consequence of the Comintern's faulty international agenda, which had estranged the party from the people.³⁷ When in 1968, Bucharest refused to participate in the suppression of "the Prague Spring," the authorities' decision had the support of a majority of the population.³⁸

*The Partial Westernization of Intellectual Culture.
Painful Memories of the Interwar Europeanized World*

The 1960s saw the debut of an exciting period for intellectuals, one consisting in the rediscovery of national history and the adoption of Western models of interpretation. Structuralism was admitted as a tool of literary criticism. For the first time, Bucharest's theaters staged the plays of Eugen Ionescu, who lived in exile in Paris. Historians even occasionally tried to elaborate a historiography based on the French *Annales* School. One was not allowed to transcend limits. Even the West was receptive to Marxist ideas!³⁹ Young graduates from universities who had managed to deploy their activities in museums, institutes and research centers started to ex-

³³ Adamson, *Socialism, Revolution, and Transition*, 88.

³⁴ Deletant, *România sub regimul communist*, 123.

³⁵ King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, 120.

³⁶ Petrescu, "Conflicting Perceptions of (Western) Europe," 199–220, in particular 200.

³⁷ Roper, *Romania*, 35, 41.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 310.

³⁹ For details on the Marxist penchant of Romanian intellectuals, see Victor Neumann, "The Concept of Totalitarianism in Romanian Socio-Political Languages," published in the present volume.

periment with ideas using as basis their scientific abilities, power of argumentation, and national directives. Yet, in actual fact, the orientation towards Europe was incomplete.

The party asked less of every one and offered citizens the possibility to retreat in their private life. Catherine Durandin held that this society was marked by a general sense of contempt. There was the general contempt towards the government years of Gheorghiu-Dej; the contempt of former aristocratic families towards the new regime; the contempt of urban arrivistes towards the backward rural world; finally, the contempt of the civil population towards the political apparatus. In this atmosphere, some citizens continued to meet in old coffee houses maintaining the faded air of the interwar years and reminding of a Europe that no longer existed.⁴⁰

*The 1970s and 1980s: Romania as a Third World Country.
A Politics Leading Nowhere*

Hybrid structures were created in Communist Poland and Hungary that created room for individual freedom and were to ameliorate the post-1989 changes. They included: an increasing legalization of social subsectors; the creation of a surplus economy; the pluralization of cultural and political agents; and openness to the global market.⁴¹

In contrast, in Nicolae Ceaușescu's Romania, people's passivity and the lack of enthusiasm towards glorious goals were a direct result of the official ideology and material constraints.⁴² Ceaușescu hoped he could overcome the European economic depression of the 1970s–1980s by withdrawing Romania from the global market. The overflowing propaganda, the charismatic greatness of the dictatorial couple, and the monumental architecture served one single goal: that of demonstrating that human will meant everything and structures only represented marginal issues. Since Ceaușescu was not able or willing to win the population over to his side via material stimuli—this would have meant increased market autonomy—he had to emphasize physical and symbolic control. In a society that no longer had intermediary structures and whose “peasants” and “workers” were confronted with “non-peasants” and “non-workers,” it was possible to introduce a model of interpretation that transcended the idea of class struggle. The place of Marxism, which was never assimilated

⁴⁰ Roper, *Romania*, 303.

⁴¹ Baga and Tatur, “Rumäniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 125.

⁴² Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 334.

in Romania,⁴³ was taken by a rural-archaic nationalism that tried to explain the backwardness of the country as being a result of the foreign-exercised systematic wronging and exploitation of people.⁴⁴ The nationalist paradigm included multiple references to the collective ego and familiar linguistic models. It allowed for a distancing from the Soviet Union but also a distancing between the government and “the people.” The nationalist discourse promised to give social attention to intellectuals, as well as to make room for development and for transcending a sterile realism.⁴⁵

As a consequence, Nicolae Ceaușescu distanced Romania from Europe and placed it among Third World countries. His “by ourselves/on our own” politics was prone to fail, because belated development causes insurmountable costs when one does not have the freedom to learn from others. From the perspective of domestic politics, his model of government was based on an ever-narrower circle of trustworthy people and an insecure apparatus.⁴⁶ In a society without goals or the certainty of the future or, more precisely, in a country of simulated changes, uncertainty and insecurity were also transferred to the administration. Given the gap between the thirst for power on the part of the few and the absence of resources and the refusal to cooperate on the part of a majority of the population, state clerks were left with no other possibility than that of making numerous compromises which jeopardized their own position. In other words, generalized corruption meant some sort of insurance bonus for helpless state clerks. Thus, while Hungary and Poland at least partly imitated the Western model, Romania turned its back to the West and directed its gaze to the underdeveloped world, claiming its own specific approach beyond any criteria.

Protochronism

Bucharest did not have a dissident movement like that of Czechoslovakia or Poland. The Romanian regime was too authoritarian to permit this,⁴⁷ but it opened several possibilities to escape to the West. The scarcity of

⁴³ Victor Neumann, “National Political Cultures and Regime Changes in Eastern and Central Europe,” in *The History of Political Thought in National Context*, ed. by Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 228–47. See also “The Concept of Totalitarianism in Romanian Socio-Political Languages,” published in the present volume.

⁴⁴ Baga and Tatur, “Rumäniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 124.

⁴⁵ Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*, 100.

⁴⁶ Shafir, *Romania*, 74.

⁴⁷ Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 327.

liberal traditions in Romania did not urge towards resistance, and the country's cultural legacy offered intellectuals contradictory forms of retaliation. On the one hand, the gap in development was acknowledged, but on the other hand, officials tried to show that Romania had the necessary potential to move ahead of the other nations. Protochronism suggested that Romania would prosper provided it made an appeal to its own culture and distanced itself from foreign influences, because at a certain moment the latter had taken possession of Romania's spiritual and material legacy. It was believed that ascent would be guaranteed in case creative forces were to be reunited to the country's benefit. Romanian protochronism took over popular models of thought; it promised revolutionary renewal through isolation from the West and instrumentalized hatred towards the previous aristocratic-bourgeois elites. Movements like *Junimea* (the Youth Movement), *Sămănătorismul* (the Idyllist Movement), *Poporanismul* (Populism), and Eminescu's *nationalism* were rediscovered and, with them, the critique of the country's opening to the outside world.

The intellectuals who challenged the system differently than protochronists and who did not leave for the West had only two alternatives of refuge:⁴⁸

1. Many historians survived within the framework drawn by the regime. They used the freedoms they possessed and developed the moral of a folk history in which national villains and heroes co-existed. They described fragments of civism from interwar Romania on the basis of the numerous existent sources on democracy and they referred to the inherent flaws of imported capitalism. They seldom used the opportunity to schematically revise political interpretations with the help of biographical scraps. That was their means of resistance and of maintaining professional self-respect. For instance, there were disputes around the question of whether the Transylvanian peasant revolt in 1784/1785 had been a social revolt or a foreshadowing of the national revolution.⁴⁹ At that time, Hungarian historians were discussing with their Western colleagues about means towards modernization and their relevance in the case of fascism.⁵⁰ From a Western perspective, the texts of Romanian

⁴⁸ Cf. Zub, "‘Europa’ in der rumänischen Kultur," 273–91; Zub, "Orizont închis"; Petrescu, "Eastern Europe, Central Europe, or Europe?," 231–49.

⁴⁹ Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*, 215.

⁵⁰ Miklós Lackó, *Arrow-Cross Men, National Socialists, 1935–1944* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1969); "Ostmitteleuropäischer Faschismus," in *VfZG* 21 (1973): 39–51; "The Social Roots of Hungarian Fascism. The Arrow-Cross," in *Who Were the Fascists?*, edited by Stein Ugelvik Larsen (Bergen: Universitets-forlaget, 1980), 395–400.

historiography largely looked obsolete—they were a too simple combination between Treitschke's historicism and a voluntary Marxism. The fact that some renowned historians had disputes over bibliographical references as to professional standards and autonomy or the fact that they had started to assimilate socio-scientific theories could not be understood as a pro-Western historiographical orientation.

2. Some Romanian intellectuals alongside numerous youngsters gathered around the philosopher Constantin Noica and visited him in his isolated abode in Păltiniș.⁵¹ They discussed Plato and other scholars, having the pleasure to discover the truth beyond concrete reality.⁵² From a religious-sociological perspective, the practice of philosophy in the isolated region of the Carpathian Mountains was in contradiction with “living in the real world” of Western Christianity of Polish or Czech inspiration.⁵³ The Romanian style of contesting the dictatorial regime remained strange and unexplainable for the mass media and Western observers of the Eastern-European cultural scene.⁵⁴

Survival through “Balkanization”

Many ways of survival existed in Romania. At the end of the 1970s, for the majority of the population, life meant a struggle for survival, which included making small deals on the black market and purloining tools from one's work place in order to be able to offer services to others.⁵⁵ What counted most was the circle made up of one's family and friends. Simultaneously, one needed some form of more or less open lies in relation to those around, as well as the falsification of statistics and the systematic maintenance of the state's and the party's illegitimate pretensions of keeping distance from the private sphere.⁵⁶ “The Balkan scenario” allowed one to keep one's self-esteem in a dictatorial world of illusions; it was based on the truth of lies and on a Caragiale-style form of paradox. Romanians had not given up Europe and they were putting forth an extremely complex and contradictory play which was hard to decode by the West and whose internal structure was to render more difficult the coun-

⁵¹ Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*, 256.

⁵² Liiceanu, “Was bedeutet es, in der Nachkriegszeit im Osten Europäer zu sein?” 109–15.

⁵³ Baga and Tatur, “Rumäniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 127.

⁵⁴ This fact also holds for the subversive opposition on the part of some writers or men of letters. Deletant, *România sub regimul comunist*, 144.

⁵⁵ Durandin, *Istoria românilor*, 331.

⁵⁶ Samson, *The Cultural Integration Model*, 180; Adamson, *Socialism*, 108.

try's transition to democracy. Europe had become inaccessible to Romanian realities, yet it was constantly present on Western radio shows (which were having more and more listeners from Romania), or during visits by relatives who promoted contacts with federal Germany, just as it constantly existed in the catalogues of companies sending products by regular mail or in the networks led by owners of digital video players that connected one to a completely different world.⁵⁷

A Past that Doesn't Go: 1989–2008. Belated Political Orientation towards Europe

Whereas in 1989 and 1990, the new elites that were drawn towards the West or the reformatory communist forces that were consciously romping with the past were clearly visible in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Romanian revolution ended with the victory of the Moscow-geared Perestroika doctrine. Depending on the support of nationalist groups, for the first five years after the revolution Romanian politics remained anchored in the logic of the authoritarian-populist discourse of Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime. When a change finally occurred in 1995, the pro-European dimension seemed inauthentic from an outside lens, a form without substance, even though legal pluralization partially created differential political structures, mass-media promoted public discourse, and privatization of state property turned families into owners.

Romania became a country divided between "the youth" and "the elders," between the city and the village, between duplicitous elites and the frustrated champions of a failed revolution. As a consequence, in its constitution, the Romanian state still lacks the elaborate separation of powers as known in modern Europe. The differentiation between political, economic and social elites is not clear yet. The political and economic powers are still largely congruent. The EU's repeated warnings about an inexistent reform of justice and the overflowing corruption that exists in the country confirm the idea that Romania's image is that of a Balkan state that might look modern from the outside but which urgently needs to reform its internal structure.

⁵⁷ Petrescu, *Conflicting Perceptions of (Western) Europe*, 215.

Cultural Diversity and the Absence of Direction

Romanian intellectuals have taken great efforts to build a new image of Romania. Hans-Christian Maner has distinguished five main directions.⁵⁸

1. Enthusiastic and inveterate Europeans like Andrei Marga,⁵⁹ Alexandru Zub, or Alina Mungiu-Pippidi see Europe as a model and Romania as a part of the European culture;
2. Ion Iliescu highlights Romania's role in Europe from a geo-political point of view;
3. Andrei Pleșu speaks of a "Balkan perspective" on Europe, one that sees the West as a civilizational and political utopia, and Europe as a place of diversity in which fusion is understood as a reciprocal learning process;
4. Sorin Antohi has put forth the idea of a deterritorialized "reticular identity" and has developed a postmodern representation that solves the problem of nationalist self-referentiality;
5. And, while Alexandru Duțu upholds Romanians' special ability for cultural assimilation, Hans-Christian Maner asserts that the Byzantine discourse has remained very influential in this country, being related to that of Nicolae Iorga but leading to completely different directions. As in previous times, the Orthodox Church would be in the difficult position of needing to confront the secularized West.

All in all, we have here a polyphony of opinions demonstrating that Romania has not yet found its place in Europe, nor has it become aware of a possible way out of the political, economic and social crises of the transition years. It has become a country of contradictions whose intellectuals are still in search of their place in Europe. The Romanian discourse does not have the characteristics of literary masterpieces; it simply reflects the competition between alternative narratives.

Romanian Suffering Caused by the Culture of "the Balkans"

If one takes a closer look at Romania's post-1989 political culture, one notices that everyday life continues to be determined by Romanians' belief that they are living in a specifically Balkan country, one whose laws

⁵⁸ Maner, "Multiple Identitäten." See also Maner, "'Europäismus' in Rumänien in den 90er Jahren," 147–70.

⁵⁹ Cf. Marga, "Identitätsbildung und politische Kultur in Osteuropa," 57–78.

only mediate the exterior appearance of civilization, whose provisions are left at the clerks' free disposal and subject to their own interpretations. What facilitated survival under communism was trust in one's own family and friends and the belief that formal requisites meant one thing while the reality meant something else. Europe therefore became a coveted different world, which could only be known through one's physical and long-term escape from Romania.

A telling example in this sense is the article entitled "De ce nu respectăm regulile?" ("Why Don't We Observe the Rules?"), published in the newspaper *Evenimentul Zilei* from 27 December 2007:

We don't observe traffic rules but we complain about the nightmarish traffic; we lie but we don't like it when politicians tell us fibs; we offer bribery but we are intolerant to corruption; we do not observe rules because we are Latin, yet we complain that we don't live as Germans do.⁶⁰

Following an INSOMAR opinion poll, 66 percent of Romanians believe that success can only be obtained by corrupted ways. Whoever is not "sly" is considered to be an obedient dupe who has an asocial behavior towards his or her own clientele. This has been the lesson taught by Ceaușescu's dictatorship, one that seems to still hold true once the protective space of the family is forsaken. Is change possible under these circumstances? The comments of the readers of the above-mentioned article from *Evenimentul Zilei* leave no room for interpretation. Romanians seem to have nothing else to do but to immigrate to Europe in case they cannot be at peace with the domestic hypocrisy and lies. "Leave Romania and don't ever think about coming back!"

In conclusion, one could say that by contrast to the Romanian situation in 1848, 1859 or 1919, Europe no longer appears as a model to imitate but it has become Romanians' coveted and envied *alter ego*. "To know Europe" means to create some physical distance from Romania's own "Balkan" reality. I wonder if Europe still means the Europe of the West or if it has not itself become "Balkan" over the last few years. I will broach this topic in what follows.

⁶⁰ Dollores Benezic, "De ce nu respectam regulile?" *Evenimentul Zilei* no. 5033 (2007): 5.

Rapprochement via Contact. Reflections on the Cultural Europeanization of Romania

The issue we have to solve today is that of the mental gap between Europe and Romania. It is not enough to only make reference to cultural models of interpretation that could be efficient for the Balkan space; nor is it sufficient to only refer to Western stereotyped models of explanation, known since the end of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ The Yugoslavia of the 1960s and 1970s could be integrated in the representation of a Europe that was open towards the social field and experimentation, while Romania was only perceived as “close to Europe.” Stereotypes are far more diverse than some historians might claim or than Maria Todorova considered in her innovative study on the representation of the Balkans. My observations also contradict Göran Therborn’s alternative interpretation according to which the social history of post-World War II Europe has been a harmonious evolution of the East and West⁶² that has led to their natural fusion.

The contemporary history of Romanian-European relations could be structured in four stages. It starts with the separation between the East and the West from the early years of the Cold War, when Europeans became aware that the world was divided and some borders could not be crossed. In the 1960s, there was a chance for the relaxation of preconceived ideas and for the renewal of old traditions, because the West detached itself from its dependence on the US, and the costs of the Cold War had become too high. When the Romanian society—freed from external constraints—insisted upon an increased autonomy like that of Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland, Nicolae Ceaușescu decreed “the cultural revolution” and positioned Romania alongside Albania, North Korea, China and Iraq, therefore, outside Europe. What remained in people’s memory was the image of a megalomaniac dictator who would hunt bears in the forests of Transylvania and would visit picturesque markets while the population suffered of cold and hunger.

Romania had never been as “Balkan” as in December 1989, a state of fact that was maintained in the following period. The West discovered Central Europe and included the Central European cultural space in its representation of a modern and liberal Europe. Czech, Hungarian and Polish intellectuals tried to meet their Western partners’ arguments half-way by highlighting their cultural difference from South-Eastern Europe.

⁶¹ Todorova, *Die Erfindung des Balkans*, x.

⁶² Therborn, *Die Gesellschaften Europas*.

While ex-Yugoslavia became well known for its hard-to-imagine nationalist wars, Slovakia and the Czech Republic solved their conflicts by peaceful means.

In the case of Romania, “the Balkanization” of the society made survival under Nicolae Ceaușescu’s dictatorship more bearable. There was no straightforward opposition to the system but a secret and subtle resistance. The revolution did not immediately lead to a transformation of society. In this sense, the errors brought by transition could also be explained by “the Balkan scenario” according to which Romania is a space of “forms without substance,” a locale of social nonchalance and of the individual’s non-observance of the public norms. Additionally, the effect of post-1989 reforms was extremely slow. For several years Western European politics waited before deciding to make an offer of accession to Romania. Yet, things happened differently because of the conflict in Yugoslavia. For Brussels, Romania’s EU integration meant a predominantly political but largely defensive project, one that lacked cultural anchorage. What mattered to Romania’s elites were the country’s political recognition and its economic perspectives, everything being based on a cultural construction that had little daily relevance.

“The Balkanization” of Romanian society was not a result of history, but that of short-term changes. Politics distanced the country from the cultural and political circle of Europe. Romania’s cultural integration in Europe therefore represents a project for the future, a possible result of reciprocal processes of learning about “Europeans” and “Romanians.” This process could be imposed by interpersonal contacts and by the propagation of Western capitalism. Even if starting points can already be identified, both aspects will determine a reinterpretation of “the Balkan scenario” of Romanian culture.⁶³ The companies that have been established here compliment the hard work and the sense of responsibility of Germans, Hungarians and Romanians from enterprises that were founded in regions having a mixed culture. Since economic elites are becoming more and more important and the influence of authoritarian groups is to get smaller, social recognition will not only be considered from a cultural point of view but also from other viewpoints.⁶⁴

Europe is no longer the Europe of the success-pampered West. The distinction Donald Rumsfeld made between “New” Europe and “Old” Europe refers to the overlapping of various interpretations about the world

⁶³ Similar arguments can be found in Antohi, “Romania and the Balkans.”

⁶⁴ Sterbling, “Soziale Anerkennungsbedürfnisse und Autoritätsbeziehungen,” 246–61.

and to his uncertainty in what regards counterattacking European discrepancy. The interpretation according to which political Europe is outside history must be considered a failure. Cultural diversity is more extended than what we used to signal in the past, and European cooperation is impossible to found on the basis of a separate past.⁶⁵ Such an approach can be called “postmodern” or “institutional” given its faith in the superiority of institutional power in the face of the past’s burdens. If any analytical reference exists, it refers to the need to distance oneself from the experience of totalitarian states.⁶⁶ Memories stay separate, reports on authors and victims are not incorporated in a European narrative, and, unlike the other Western societies, Germans are more and more refractory “to the complex history of repression from Eastern Europe.” It will be important for the future of both the East and the West to “closely listen to memories and stories,”⁶⁷ to accept diverse opinions and develop common values through dialogue. At the same time, Romanian scientists are increasingly publishing in English, French and German, while Western intellectuals are increasingly able to publish their works in Romania.

From an everyday perspective, the image of Romania has gained new, surprising traits. Western commerce sells articles whose labels comprise the description of the product in English, French and Romanian. German and Romanian consumers eat the same product and read the same information. When Continental and Nokia create brand products in Romania, the perception of the country changes because this state-of-the-matter does not correspond to the image of “the chaotic Balkans.” On the acquisition of a Dacia Logan car manufactured in Pitești and Mioveni, the German buyer receives a guarantee of up to five years. At the same time, readers of high circulation magazines will discover that Romania went up from the 87th place (in 2004) to the 69th place (in 2007) in point of its index of international corruption, while Germany was not able to keep its place at number 15.⁶⁸ Thus, the distance between “Balkan” Romania and “immoral” Germany does not seem to be that great.

Despite all adversities, exaggerations, and the scandalization of the political field, intellectual debates started in Romania with the search for a

⁶⁵ This is the basic idea of “the Copenhagen Criteria,” which must be met by countries aspiring to become members of the EU.

⁶⁶ Heinen, “Das ‘neue Europa’ und das ‘alte Amerika,’” 209–27.

⁶⁷ König, *Politik und Gedächtnis*, 652.

⁶⁸ Cf. Transparency International: <http://www.transparency.org> (last accessed 24. 08. 2008).

manner to realistically describe the country. The fact that Romanian scholars have not yet been able to give consensual answers is a common trait characterizing the debate throughout the whole of Europe. From the point of view of daily history, Romanian youngsters of today live their own experiences alongside Europeans by learning other languages, studying in different countries, and regularly watching Western television shows.

According to Ramona Samson, Europe and Romania are based on the same process of transition: they are exposed to the same changes because not only the new state members but the whole of Europe must assert itself in the transition towards pro-Western and post-national structures. Meanwhile, people should find answers to the following question: how could the new member states face up to cultural diversity and multiple modernities?⁶⁹ By admitting Romania within its structure, the European Union has changed; at the same time, Romania has also changed by adhering to the Union.

Romania's cultural integration in Europe represents a challenge for the future. The social mechanism in a world that does not know clear borders and whose modern social structures (the family, the environment, the national state) overlap with trans-ethnic and transnational networks will lead to the creation of a space in which representations of national specificity can only have dwindled relevance.

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⁶⁹ Samson, *The Cultural Integration Model*.

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The Concept of *Constitution* in the History of Romanian Legal Thought

Edda Binder Iijima

Decisions ensuring political order have been laid down under different names in Romanian history and legal language, such as: *sound/substantial laws*, *fundamental laws*, *endowment*, *pravilă* (archaic word in Romanian for *law* [or *a group of laws*], *disposal*, *regulation*, *act* [with civil or clergy-related character]), *regulations/rules*, *constitution* or *constituțiune* (archaic form of *constitution*, in Romanian). My study aims to address a set of questions and problematic issues regarding the concept of *constitution* in Romanian culture. *Constituțiune* (the archaic form of *constitution*, in Romanian, meaning state constitution) entered the Romanian socio-political language from the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in the third decade of the nineteenth century. Borrowed from French, the term was already in use by the second half of the eighteenth century. Most complaint letters of the times were addressed to foreign rulers, and French was the language in which political norms were formulated. The French-originating neologism of *constitution* was adopted by Romania in order to designate a fundamental, legally instituted order that accompanied a form of government.¹

Constitutional thought used various concepts before the variant of *constituție* (*constitution*) established itself in 1866. In its linguistic usage, the notion designated a state's fundamental law and it was used to refer to the new order that had not been imposed from the outside but represented a compromise among various Romanian political concepts. This idea of compromise, just as that of consensus from the 1866 Constitution, disappeared from the fundamental law of the country that was reformulated

¹ This term became a key-concept designating the state constitution in mid-eighteenth-century France. See Schmale, "Constitution, Constitutionnel," 35; Vlad, "Inventarea 'Constituției'," 28.

between 1938 and 1991. According to the latter, the new political-administrative elites could unilaterally change the basic principles of the country and illegitimately establish their own domination. It was only after the 1989 overthrow of the communist dictatorship that the 1991 Constitution returned to the social consensus regarding legal norms, albeit this was only precariously tackled therein.

The constitution, understood as a written system of norms that were superior to consent-based law and absolutely necessary in the existence of a state, was elaborated in the socio-political milieus of the Principalities by distinguishing and crystallizing certain fundamental principles. Since they were different in point of state affiliation and internal organization, Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia developed various programs of stately order. In Transylvanian political thought, it was paramount to solicit the legal equality of the Wallachian nation, or the *natio valachica*, with the other “nations” and to also ask for proportionate representation in the Transylvanian Regimen in view of maintaining the stately order of the Habsburg Empire and Hungary, respectively.² In contrast, the constitutional representatives from Moldavia and Wallachia evolved in the direction of a dispute meant to reject outside interventions and lead to the acquisition of autonomy in the case of decisional trials.

The issue of the fundamental principles of state order was at the core of linguistic, historical and political debates regarding the constitutional system from Moldavia, Wallachia, and Romania, respectively. The first attempt to reorganize the state administration was due to *Constituția Cărvunarilor* (the *Constitution of the Cărvunari*) from 1822. A first stage in the process of the formation of the Romanian state and nation was represented by the *Constitution* from 1866, which inaugurated the use of the concept of *constitution* as part of daily socio-political languages.³ Constitutional thought later used this notion and conferred new meanings on it. Its evolution in Transylvania until 1918 requires a separate investigation because it must include theoretical interdependencies. One should consider, for instance, the influence exercised by the legal thought of Simion Bărnuțiu and the school he ran on the concept of *constitution* both in Transylvania and Moldavia.

A conceptual history investigation imposes the analysis of Romania's various constitutional projects. This should be a diachronic analysis in

² For *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* from 1791, see Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*.

³ The two distinct forms of constitution in Romanian (*constituție* and *constituțiune*) can be explained in light of whether the term was borrowed from Russian or French.

which the changes in meanings become visible. The projects either correspond to a turning point in Romania's history or a transitional period ("Sattelzeit") in the sense which Reinhart Koselleck gave to the term.⁴ The adoption and assimilation of legal notions and concepts in a socio-political language happens as a result of a competition between old and new concepts. The aim of this study is to present the historical premises and the process of evolution of the idea of constitution. Its lexicon, semantics, syntax and morphology as linguistic transpositions of social relations cannot be analyzed in detail because they would imply the use of too vast a number of texts and bibliographical sources. In general, like other similar terms, the concept of *constitution* was considered to be an element that accompanied modernization and was dependent upon external cultural and political influences.

The Premises behind the Formation and Introduction of the Concept of *Constitution* (1774–1821)

The last stage of the Phanariot rules (1711/1716–1821) was characterized by political and cultural changes which generated new approaches in point of political thought. While Russia increased its influence on the principalities after the 1774 peace of Kuciuc-Kainargi, the insecurity of the bourgeois elite contributed to their becoming aware of the crisis of instability characterizing the Phanariot rulers, the economic deficiencies of their states, and the lacks that had been generated by the continuous disputes among Russia, the Habsburg House and the Ottoman Empire. The transfer of information was intensified on a cultural level by the mediation offered by Greeks and Russians. Thus, boyars and the high clergy came in contact with Enlightenment ideas and with the change brought about by the French Revolution and Napoleon's Wars.

The increasingly virulent critique of the precarious political situation of the region and the reflection on the causes of this situation led to the use of new approaches regarding state organization. In a first stage, this implied moving in a direction that would bring the support of great powers. Russia, the Habsburg House, and to a lesser degree, France, became the main addressees of the principalities' anti-Ottoman and anti-Greek reform projects. The dominant discourse present in the various letters

⁴ See his introduction in Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1, xv.

and petitions of the period focused on the foreign domination represented by the Greek elite and supported by the Ottoman power, just as it highlighted the unstable structure of this power and the necessity to limit its scope.⁵ The authors of such discourses were high Moldavian and Wallachian boyars who had lost the right to participate in the political life of these states. In this context, claiming autonomy from the Ottoman Empire was based on the theory of capitulations and equal-rights contractual relations between Bucharest/Iași and Constantinople. Boyars solicited the guarantee of the principalities' autonomy, as well as their right to regulate their domestic issues and benefit from the protection of great powers.⁶

The first evidence regarding the use of the concept of *constitution* goes back to an 1802 petition by "Wallachian inhabitants" who addressed themselves to Tsar Alexander I. The document implied that the *hatt-i sharif* (The Imperial Edict that the Ottoman Sultan imposed upon its provinces and vassal states) from that year which established the appointment of the prince was called "*nouvelle constitution*" ("*the new constitution*"). The Tsar was asked to make sure that the Ottomans would obey this constitution.⁷ In an 1802 letter to Napoleon I, Moldavian boyars put their hopes in a *constitution* (French for *constitution*) that would improve the situation of their country.⁸ A similar line of argumentation also appeared in an 1807 letter addressed to the same Napoleon I and which asked for a prince that would govern according to the principle of a "constitution conforme à notre goût" (a "constitution in keeping with our tastes").⁹ These letters to the great powers prove that the choice of princes and their government were considered fundamental for the country's prosperity while the instability of power, the tendency towards absolutism and especially the "intrusion" of Greek rulers were rejected.

Boyars also invoked their own rights to be engaged in the state's affairs. In this sense they reclaimed a protectorate-based contract. These demands proved that the traditional law exercised by the boyars' *șfat*

⁵ Georgescu, *Ideile politice și Iluminismul în Principatele Române*, 102.

⁶ Ibid., 144; Șotropa, *Proiectele de constituție, programele de reforme și petițiile de drep-turi din Țările Române în secolul al XVIII-lea și prima jumătate a secolului al XIX*, 38.

⁷ On the widespread level of French knowledge among Romanian boyars, see Dan Berindei, "Diffusions des 'idées françaises' dans les pays roumains et l'impact de la Révolution de 1789," in Kossok (ed.), 1789. *Weltwirkung einer großen Revolution*, II, 472–92; Georgescu, *Mémoires et projets de réforme dans les Principautés Roumaines 1831–1848*, 157.

⁸ Șotropa, *Proiectele de constituție*, 40; Georgescu, *Ideile politice și Iluminismul*, 108.

⁹ Ibid., 46; Georgescu, *Ideile politice și Iluminismul*, 108.

(*council*) was not considered to be legitimate in an international context. Dimitrie Cantemir had also noticed the causal link between Phanariot rulers, Ottoman oppression and the erosion of the rulers' absolute rights in his book *Descriptio Moldaviae*, written at the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁰ The concept of *constitution* therefore referred to the written limitation of the princes' domination; on the one hand, it was inscribed within a historical continuity and, on the other hand, it represented a change of the political paradigm.

The time's reform projects did not use the neologisms of *constituție* or *constituțiune*, and the parallel concepts of *așezământ* or *pravilă* were accompanied by explanatory comments such as "pravilele pământului" (the laws of the country), in order to convey the meaning of fundamental laws especially mediating relations of authority between the bourgeois elite and the ruler. The Slavic etymon of *pravilă* comprised a semantic complexity that was higher than that of the French-based *constitution*. Depending on the context of use, *pravilă* could mean law, rule/regulation, right/disposal or common law. In his book *În scurt luare de amintire pentru oareșcari îndreptări în administrația Moldovei* (*A Brief Overview of Some Corrections regarding the Administration of Moldavia*) (1818), Iordache Rosetti-Rosnovanu solicited the limitation of the ruler's power, so that his would not be *pravilă* (law) and the legislative power could be vested in the general assembly. The ruler would only have the right to correct the country's laws (*pravilele pământului*) without the right to change them.¹¹ Just like the complaint letters written in French, the reform projects written in Romanian were directed against the unlimited authority of the Phanariots, asking for the boyars' right to power and for a better administration of financial resources.

¹⁰ Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae. Facsimil al ediției originale de la 1771* [*Descriptio Moldaviae. Facsimile of the original edition from 1771*], 105. In the original Latin version of the text, "foreigners" are called "alienigenarum," which was translated in Romanian by an often-used expression meaning "foreign by kin." Cantemir, *Descriptio antiqui et hodierni status Moldaviae. Descrierea Moldovei* (*The Description of Moldavia*), translated from Latin by Gh. Guțu, (Bucharest: Academia R.S.R., 1973), 124–5.

¹¹ Georgescu, *Ideile politice și Iluminismul*, 108.

The Process of Adopting the Concept of Constituție/Constituțiune (1821–1866)

The period between 1821 and 1866 was characterized by the co-existence of two complementary directions regarding the lower and middle-level boyars' claims of participation to political life. These boyars' more and more frequent contact with the Western world contributed to the development of their political consciousness, especially their education abroad, usually in France, which facilitated their assimilation of modern political and legal concepts and of practical lessons regarding the course of events. For instance, the 1848 revolution in Wallachia could for the first time implement a short-term Romanian reformatory constitution, the so-called *Islaz Proclamation* from 9–21 June 1848. The discourse on basic state and societal principles came to the end of this first stage thanks to the 1866 Constitution.

The other direction regarding the process of elaborating the constitution was determined by the intervention of great powers. First Russia codified the constitutional principles of the legally constituted states of Moldavia and Wallachia through several agreements with the suzerain power (the Convention from Akkermann, 1826, the Peace of Adrianopolis, 1829). Those agreements imposed upon the two Romanian principalities the Organic Regulations from 1831/1832. The great powers were to assume the mission of reorganizing the principalities at the 1858 Convention in Paris. In short, the evolution of the Romanian constitutional thought functioned as a more or less strained response to the fundamental laws of the state that were imposed from the outside; i.e., a reaction to the concrete political consequences of these laws. Because French held an important mediating function within foreign political contacts, being the language used for various constitutional projects, the translation into Romanian of the French concept of *constitution* favored both the use of the Romanian term of *constituție* and the imposition of its semantics on the Romanian language.

The end of Phanariot rule and the post-1821 crowning of autochthonous rulers led to the fulfillment of one of the fundamental demands of the bourgeois elite. The year 1821 also marked the inclusion of peasants in a new political order, but the total lack of bourgeois support as well, since boyars actually wanted to hamper this progress. No new constitutional conceptualizations occurred. The renowned Constitution of the *Cărvunari* from 1822 allegedly written by Ionică Tăutu from Moldavia functioned without a new concept of *constitution* and was later dubbed as such. For

the first time people formulated demands which referred to all the fields of the state order. At the same time, human rights were mentioned in keeping with how they had been formulated during the French Revolution.

The 77 points making up a catalog of recovery demands to the Ottoman Government had to constitute the foundation of governance until the establishment of “the country’s perfectly-built law.”¹² The starting point was represented by the country’s internal autonomy, more precisely by the freedom to use its own legislation without affecting its relations to the Ottoman Empire; this indicated the adoption of Ottoman suzerainty as a common good of political thought. General principles (like equality in front of the law) and detailed dispositions (such as the founding of a printing house) were formulated via linguistic forms that included clumsy paraphrases and assumed Western ideas on political and civil rights. The concept *pravilă* (*the law of the land*) was a key-term which not only referred to the fundamental laws of a state (*pravilele de temelie/the founding laws of the land*) but also to political decisions regarding the regulation of the relations between the government and its subjects, civil, criminal or commercial laws. Ionică Tăutu knew the concept of *constituție* (*constitution*), but he opposed it to the concept of *règlement* (*regulation*) and understood it as designating the geo-political rapports among countries, making reference to its uses in England and France.¹³

In conclusion, during the second decade of the nineteenth century, the concept of *constituție/constitution* was primarily associated with lower and middle-level boyars’ reclaiming the right to participate in the state’s affairs. This was considered a threat to legitimate order, as it transpires from Mihail Sturdza’s memorandum to the Russian Consul Minciaki from February 1823:

Just the term of constitution already designates the idea of an assault on authority, especially when the principles contained therein tend to be disorganized. The constitution elaborated by the lower class contains 70 articles that copy similar principles to the above-mentioned ones.¹⁴

¹² Quote from A.D. Xenopol, *Istoria partidelor politice în România*, vol. I, 573–96; also cf. Vlad, “Inventarea ‘Constituției’,” 18.

¹³ Ibid., 20. Tăutu, *Scrieri social politice*, 262.

¹⁴ *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor (Col. Hurmuzaki)*, 7: “Le nom seul d’une constitution désigne déjà un acte attentatoire à l’autorité, et surtout lorsque les principes qui y sont énoncés tendent à une désorganisation. La constitution que la classe inférieure a rédigée contient en soixante-dix-sept articles des dispositions calquées sur de pareils principes.”

Nevertheless, there was complete consensus on the issue of autonomy, and even a representative of the great boyars like Sturdza was against the Ottoman Empire's interference with Moldavia's laws ("its laws and canons").¹⁵ The negative connotations of the French concept of *constitution* and its discreditation in complaint letters addressed to the great powers represented the great boyars' efficient weapons to raise the attention of the Russian government and the Tsar in the Era of Restoration out of fear they might use their hegemony. Yet, reform projects continued to maintain the grid of argumentation according to which the constitution would represent a limitation of the ruler's power. The Adrianopolis peace negotiations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire also considered the political-administrative reorganization of the principalities. A similar situation also characterized the Romanian principalities' relation to Greece, where a catalogue of demands included goals such as: union, complete independence, and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy led by a foreign prince that would govern the country on the basis of "the monarchical constitution."¹⁶

The limitation of the ruler's prerogatives was reflected in the Organic Regulations that Russia elaborated in collaboration with the great boyars of Moldavia and Wallachia. This substantial legal work incorporated fundamental principles that were treated as laws—these included the separation of state powers, the election of the prince and the Assembly of Boyars, and they stipulated exact dispositions in the political, social and economic fields. The term of *constitution* was not yet used while the well-known term of *pravilă* was the one employed for fundamental laws, being used in the sense of common laws. In this sense, the Assembly of Boyars institutionalized by these Regulations perceived itself as the guarantor of rights and the initiator of the population's well-being: "In one word, this assembly will be the protector of rights and the cause of its compatriots' happiness, just as it used to be before and after the implementation of land laws."¹⁷

The Organic Regulations had been the expression of traditional rights to reorganize socio-political rapports, and this was reflected in their appeal to the historical tradition that was *in keeping with the old structures and customs*¹⁸ and which was in contrast to the ruler's standard oath in

¹⁵ Ibid. 9.

¹⁶ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 84.

¹⁷ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României. Acte și documente 1741–1991* [The Constitutional development of Romania. Acts and documents, 1741–1991], 108.

¹⁸ Ibid., 108, 122 (a version of the Regulations from Moldavia).

which he pledged to maintain the established laws and new regulations (“land laws and other rules from the Principality of Wallachia as they have been established in the regulation,” and “laws and institutions from the Principality of Moldavia, in keeping with the established regulation”).¹⁹ Such discontinuities were also reflected in the language used, when the supreme power of the lord could be called the *ruling power* but also *the sovereign power* (to quote its version from Moldavia).²⁰

If the principalities avoided using the concept of *constituție* (*constitution*) as an equivalent to the Organic Regulations, considering it too progressive and suggestive of independence and autonomy, for the French space the equation of the notion of *règlements* with the French concept of *constitution* did not pose a problem. This also transpired from the contract between Russia and the Ottoman Empire from January 1834:

Not finding anything in the articles of the constitution that could affect its sovereign rights, the Ottoman Empire henceforth consents to the formal recognition of the above-mentioned Constitution.²¹

In the principalities' rapports with the Ottomans, the concept of *constituție* (*constitution*) only referred to the internal autonomy of the principalities, without bringing any change in its position in conformity with international law. Nevertheless, the use of the concept in a French-language international contract already referred to the normality of its use for designating the state's fundamental laws, even if the principalities were not sovereign states yet.

The concept of *constituțiune/constituție* (*constitution*) and all its derivatives became widespread between 1830 and 1840; both the newly founded newspapers and the French-Romanian dictionaries contributed to this.²² The concept acquired the modern meaning of a set of fundamental laws regarding a state's government, so that this label was sometimes adopted in the case of the Organic Regulations too. For reform-oriented boyars, the Regulations were associated with the threat of a Russian protectorate and even Russian annexation, but also with the guarantee of the

¹⁹ Ionescu *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 104, 118 (a version of the Regulations from Moldavia).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 108, 122.

²¹ Schmidt, *Die verfassungsrechtliche und politische Struktur des rumänischen Staates in ihrer historischen Entwicklung*, 111: “La Sublime Porte ne trouvant rien dans les Articles de cette Constitution qui puisse affecter ses droits de souveraineté, consent dès à présent à reconnaître formellement la dite Constitution.”

²² Vlad, “Inventarea ‘Constituției’...,” 28.

great boyars' monopoly over power. Concrete deficiencies in the country's administration under the government of autochthonous rulers generated a lively critique of the general situation and the new constitutional project that contradicted the legal sense held under the name of *constituție* (constitution) and which was contained within the Organic Regulations.

This reformatory thought found its expression in the renowned constitutional project from November 1838, which was initially formulated in French; its initiators were the boyars from the general assembly and their leader, Ion Câmpineanu. Wallachia assimilated the concepts of *constitution/constituție* with *lois fondamentales/legi fundamentale* (fundamental laws) by which terms they understood the country's own laws and conventions. The quality of the Organic Regulations as a corpus of laws was annulled following external pressure.²³ The French concept of *constitution* found its Romanian-language equivalent in the concept of *constituție*:

The country's constitution has called them to examine if the laws are carried out, if the treaties are observed, if they have a national prince that corresponds to the country's taste, if the constitution fulfills its role, if order, justice and economy reign in all branches of the administration, if the magistrates are taken into consideration, if the State funds are used to the benefit of the country, in a word, they are called to see if the Wallachians are happy [...] ²⁴

Ioan Câmpineanu's project generated fundamental constitutional functions such as the legitimization of political order and the normative aspect of guaranteeing it in view of people's welfare. The people's representatives had the right to elaborate a new constitution as a consolidation of the idea of sovereignty. The constitution was critical to "foreign oppression" ("oppression étrangère") and "domestic anarchy" ("anarchie intérieure") and asked for autonomy and the union of Wallachia and Moldavia in view of consolidating the state and creating a new internal order, respectively. Alongside fundamental political rights, an important role was to be played by decisions regarding the prince's position (heredity, suzerainty).²⁵

The 1848 revolutionary movements represented a decisive moment for the evolution of the concepts of *constituție*, *constituțiune* and their deriva-

²³ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 118–23, 160–2.

²⁴ Ibid., 121: "Appelés par la constitution de pays à examiner si les lois sont exécutées, si les traités sont respectés, si le prince est national et du choix du pays, si l'objet de la constitution est rempli, si l'ordre, la justice et l'économie règnent dans toutes les branches de l'administration, si les magistrats sont considérés, si les fonds de l'Etat sont employés pour le bien de l'État en un mot si les Valaques sont heureux...."

²⁵ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 125.

tives. In Moldavia, where the timid reform attempts to apply the Regulations²⁶ failed, Mihail Kogălniceanu formulated a first coherent constitution during his exile in Cernăuți/Czernowitz. The first article in this constitution defined Moldavia as a constitutional state (“Moldavia is a constitutional state”).²⁷ Kogălniceanu also debated the question of the ratio between traditional and modern institutions in his book *Dorințele partidei naționale în Moldova* (Wishes of the National Party of Moldavia). Analyzed from a historical perspective, there was no incompatibility between these two types of institutions, the politician noting a similarity between the old historical laws of Moldavia and the constitutions of other countries. As Kogălniceanu noted, the reclamations of the National Party were not only made up of imitations and borrowings:

Because they [institutions, n.n.] are somehow similar to other peoples’ constitutions, one should not conclude that they represent imitations or borrowings; they are not a plagiarism of democratic and socialist propaganda as the Note of the Russian Cabinet from July 19 would like to call them.²⁸

If the above-mentioned politician used concepts like *constitutional state* and *constitution* in their modern senses, he contested the Regulations as fundamental laws because they had been created under external pressure and they had destroyed the old laws as well as the link to the past: “A fundamental law of the country must nonetheless be an indigenous plant, the expression of the nation’s vices and needs.”²⁹ The resulting conclusion was that a legitimate constitution had to be anchored in one’s own traditions and be the expression of the nation’s will. Mihail Kogălniceanu solved the tension between tradition and modernity, and interpreted the emergence of the new institutions in Moldavia and Wallachia as legitimate adaptations of those that already existed in the principalities. He upheld the same interpretation during the debates around the 1866 Constitution. Kogălniceanu preferred to legitimate the new order on the basis of historic continuity³⁰ more than on genuinely revolutionary rupture.³¹

²⁶ Ibid., 359. The concept of *constituție* was not used in this petition-proclamation; on the contrary, its signatories solicited the “holy preservation” of the Organic Regulations.

²⁷ Ibid., 144–54.

²⁸ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 653.

²⁹ Ibid., 652.

³⁰ Vorländer, “Gründung und Geltung. Die Konstitution der Ordnung und die Legitimität der Konstitution,” 247.

³¹ Victor Neumann, “Elitele și problema modernizării României” [Elites and the question of Romania’s modernization], in *Viața Românească* 8–9 (2009): 11–19; see the para-

In contrast to Moldavia, the revolutionary government from Wallachia was able to keep the reins of power for three months before being done away with by the Ottoman and Russian troops. Among its demands, the *Islaz Proclamation* from 9/12 June 1848 also asked for “the immediate convocation of an extraordinary generally-constituted assembly” that would represent all of the nation’s interests and professions (point 22). Its mission consisted in the attempt to elaborate a *constitution* on the basis of the 21 points of the *Proclamation*, one which would promote the political goals of the revolution, namely: administrative and legislative autonomy; a representative system of the National Assembly; the non-hereditary position of the ruler; the responsibility of ministers and clerks; freedom of press; equal political rights; fiscal justice; the emancipation of groups deprived of rights (slaves, the Rroma, Jews); the establishment of a national guard; the nationalization of monasteries; a system of public education and the abolition of the capital punishment.³² The proclamation was influenced by *The Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizens* from 1789 and *The French Constitution* from 1793. One might be led to believe that the presentation of the people by the phrase of “sovereign people” more likely referred to French models than to the 1821 representations of social justice by Tudor Vladimirescu.³³

The concepts of *constituție* (*constitution*), *dreptate* (*justice*) and *frăție* (*fraternity*) were simultaneously used in 1848 Wallachia as terms briefly defining the new political order, but also functioning as metonyms of the revolution.³⁴ One particular theory was surprising: the one regarding the origins of the constituent power, namely the sovereign people. The theory highlighted the origins of legitimacy³⁵: “The Constitution was received following the will of the people”; “Thanks to the new Constitution that the Romanian people gave themselves”; “A new Constitution was proclaimed

graph entitled “Pașoptiții și geneza statului român” [The 1848 revolutionaries and the birth of the Romanian State], 11–14.

³² Vorländer, “Gründung und Geltung,” 533.

³³ One cannot speak of a semantic equivalence between the French-language *peuple* (sovereign) and the Romanian *popor* (sovereign) (sovereign people); the meanings of the two concepts have been marked by different historical evolutions and by different political and legal references; see Neumann, “Conceptul de *Peuple* la Jules Michelet” [The concept of *Peuple* as used by Jules Michelet], in *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, 13–47.

³⁴ See the provisional text addressed to prince Gheorghe Bibescu on 9/12 June 1848, *ibid.*, 541, 546. Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz*, 148.

³⁵ This was perhaps “surprising” because the legal relation between the governing body and the population from Wallachia was seen in light of the ideals of the French Revolution and not of Romanian social realities (editors’ note, V.N. and A.H.).

this very day through the unanimous will of the people.”³⁶ The superiority of this legitimation was also expressed in front of ruler Gheorghe Bibescu, who nevertheless refused this modification of the basis for power and abdicated.³⁷

Transformed into a constitution, the *Islaz Proclamation* did not only represent the legal basis for the revolutionary government, it also contained a religious dimension. Both from a linguistic point of view and from that of meanings properly speaking, the Proclamation proved to be a hybrid construct in which a modern lexis co-existed with one of theological origin. The 1848 program had been formulated in a religious language with pathetic accents, which interpreted political claims from the perspective of biblical formulations about fraternity, the maintenance of order, the fulfillment of demands, and a revolution under God’s protection. This approach facilitated the rural population’s understanding of the political message, while the revolution legitimated itself as the founder of law and Christian justice in the latter’s name. The sacralization of the new constitution³⁸ was present in the debates of the commission on property, in which the “sacred” epithet always appeared in the argumentation of the peasants’ representatives in order to justify their claims:

From now on [...] we should follow the Constitution which is as holy as the Bible; it is meant to enlighten us by union, justice, and fraternity so that you might give us a small parcel of land to ensure our food and the nourishment of our cattle.³⁹

In their turn, the boyars were to use similar arguments when they solicited the recognition of “the consecration of property.”⁴⁰ In the theoretical context generated by terms such as *justice* and *fraternity*, for both the elites and the people, the *constitution* represented not only a legal aspect but also the expression of Christian morality and the just order which it legitimately established.

From the point of view of foreign politics, the new constitution represented by the *Proclamation* declared the administrative and legislative

³⁶ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 545–6, 549.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 550.

³⁸ Thus, Nicolae Bălcescu explicitly referred to the revolutionary aspect of Jesus’s deeds and the progressive character of the divine will in his introduction to the unfinished historical work *Istoria Românilor sub Mihailu-Vodă-Viteazul* [The history of Romanians under Michael the Brave], which he had started during his exile in 1849 (Bucharest: Typ. Soc. Academice Române, 1878).

³⁹ Berindei, *Revoluția Română din 1848–1849*, 284.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 280.

independence based on the old treaties between Mircea the Elder/Vlad the Impaller and the Ottoman Empire. It also invoked the principle of a great power's non-intervention in the internal affairs of the subject country without asking for a change of the country's status in the international context. Since the new rapports could be periclitated by a Russian or Ottoman military intervention, the constitution had to minimize its revolutionary character and foreground the legal legitimacy of the new power.⁴¹ The new argumentation from such a constitution referred to Romanians' integration in "the great European family which aspired towards the guarantee of everyone's rights."⁴² The constitution symbolized the principle of synchronization with events from (Western) Europe and with *the spirit of the century*⁴³ on which they also based their vain hope of European powers' recognizing the *de factum* state of Wallachia.⁴⁴ One of the basic principles of this *spirit of the century* was formulated in the Proclamation from Wallachia and the constitutional project of Moldavia elaborated by Mihail Kogălniceanu: "The main characteristic of our epoch is the triumph of justice over power," and "the time of coercion and of the strongest always being right has gone."⁴⁵ This principle of the supremacy of law in the face of force implicitly meant a conscious distancing from the Ottoman and Tsarist Empires.

The interruption of revolutionary aspirations in the Danubian principalities via the intervention of Ottoman and Russian troops in September 1848 resulted in the backgrounding of debates on the concept of *constituție* (constitution). The project represented by the *Proclamation from Islaz*, a substitute of a state constitution, did not get the consent of Romania's politicians and did not resist to external pressure in spite of its quasi-religious over-evaluation. Even as such, the revolutionary movements transformed the *constitution* into a key-concept associated with the principle of representativity and fundamental rights. On the other hand, those who were opposed to revolutionary ideas associated this concept with the

⁴¹ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 541.

⁴² Ibid., 546.

⁴³ Ibid., 528.

⁴⁴ The model of a "civilized, Enlightened and erudite Europe" to which one aspired and whose support one hoped to get is a South-Eastern-European topos for the formation of the modern state, one that also appears in constitutional debates from Greece during the war of independence. Katsiardi-Hering, "Die Europaidee in den Texten des griechischen Unabhängigkeitskrieges (1821–1829)," 237–51.

⁴⁵ Bodea, *1848 la Români*, vol. I, 665 and 541.

overthrow of legal order.⁴⁶ After 1848, the debate about the future of the Romanian principalities was waged in exile while the principalities reinforced the Organic Regulations, some provisions of which were sanctioned by the Ottoman Empire and the Tsarist Empire through the 1849 Convention from Balta Liman. The dependence on great powers and the lack of firmness generated new reform programs in which the unity of Wallachia and Moldavia and the idea of a government led by a foreign prince became the main desires. Also expressed in 1848, these ideas acquired a different intensity, the primordial one referring to the appointment of a foreign ruler.

The end result of the War of Crimea, represented by the defeat of Russia, created the premises of a foreign politics that would lead to the state's reorganization. The 1858 Convention from Paris imposed a new constitution on the Romanian principalities; this was in fact a compromise negotiated by the great powers and which only partially cared about the Romanian population's wishes. The latter's desires had been expressed by Romanian representatives in the four, and respectively five points of the *ad hoc* divan councils: 1) the observance of the old treaties with the Ottomans which ensured the countries' independence; 2) the union of the two principalities in a single state called Romania; 3) a foreign ruler belonging to a governing dynasty from Western Europe; 4) neutrality (a point held by Moldavia's *ad hoc* divan council); 5) a General Assembly elected as a result of a broader vote, the Wallachian version also adding the clarification that the assembly would be elected "following the oldest customs of the country." Another complementary argument invoked was that of historical continuity and legitimacy.⁴⁷

These claims defined the basic constitutional conditions for the much expected political reorganization that would facilitate the establishment of the national state. The Paris Convention from August 1858 only accepted the first point and, to a much lesser degree, the last one; meanwhile, Romanians managed to achieve the union of the principalities by the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza as ruler in 1859. The convention meant a constitution, i.e., a fundamental law, and Cuza explicitly mentioned this in his oath before the electoral assembly of Moldavia on 5/17 January 1859. In his speech, Cuza pledged to defend the motherland's rights and interests and specified "that he would be faithful to the Constitutional text and

⁴⁶ Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz im Rumänischen um die Zeit der Vereinigung der Fürstentümer Moldau und Walachei*, 79.

⁴⁷ Focșeneanu, *Istoria constituțională a României 1859–1991*, 17.

spirit,” calling himself “a Constitutional ruler.”⁴⁸ His oath in front of the electoral assembly in Wallachia, however, did not make any reference to the Convention or the Constitution; it only mentioned the preservation of the rights and interests of the United Principalities.⁴⁹ Cuza’s manifestos conferred a central role to the idea of the supremacy of law and the observance of rights; this accompanied his promise to govern as a *constitutional ruler* who marked a decisive moment in Romanian governance by the imposition of certain constitutional limits and the renunciation to absolutist ideas.

There was however a vulnerable point in the Paris Convention, according to which this constitution did not belong to modernity. This referred to its adoption by the people. Centered on the concepts of *constituție/constituțiune*, the Romanian political debate highlighted many divergent points. In October 1859, the Central Commission in charge of the administrative union of the two principalities elaborated a constitutional project that was not put into practice because of contradictory discussions surrounding the issue of bringing in a foreign ruler.⁵⁰ The distancing from the Paris convention was semantically highlighted by the characterization of this constitutional project as a national creation, the result of the country’s autonomy and of the initiative of a free and independent nation.⁵¹ The nation and the union represented key-concepts from the beginning of Alexandru Ioan Cuza’s rule, while the issue of a foreign ruler entered the constitutional debate because of Cuza’s *coup d’état* and his social reforms in 1864. After Cuza’s overthrow in 1866, the decisions of the Paris Convention reappeared in the discourse of the new power-holders. They were seen as foreign dictates of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires and not as a response to the Romanian aspirations for independence.⁵² Just as in the case of the Organic Regulations, the Convention failed because its legitimacy was limited in scope.

⁴⁸ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 263.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 270 (Cuza’s manifesto to the Wallachian people from 8/20 February 1859).

⁵⁰ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 280.

⁵¹ Ibid., 301 (Kogălniceanu’s formulation).

⁵² Sturdza, *Domnia Regelui Carol I. Fapte*, 153.

Romania's Constitution (1866–1938)

The 1866 Constitution met the criteria of a fundamental law and was adopted by the sovereign people represented by the Constituent Assembly. No foreign power participated at its formulation or had any decisive right, even though some sovereignty rights in foreign politics were omitted out of consideration for the Ottoman Empire such as, for instance, the right to decide upon the state of peace or war. People no longer mentioned their dependence on Ottomans, which had previously been highlighted by bilateral treaties and capitulations. The model was now constituted by the Belgian Constitution: the latter was attractive because it had managed to establish in Belgium a constitutional monarchy led by a foreign ruler. The 1866 Constitution recognized the validity of the new order after an initial unstable political period. As a fundamental law of the country, it became a reference point for the political system of monarchy until 1947. The 1866 Constitution that was simultaneously based on consensus and compromise became Romanians' constitution par excellence.⁵³ It was elaborated by observing the principle of the people's sovereignty and stipulated a bi-chamber system of the representatives as well as the separation of state powers; it defined decision-making competences of state institutions, regulated access to power, and guaranteed civil rights. The long and efficient governance of Charles I von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, Romania's first foreign prince and king, was an indicator of the legitimacy enjoyed by the Constitution thanks to the numerous effects and transformations it represented in view of the good functioning of the political system.

The 1866 Constitution was a European-standard document; it placed the country among the constitutional states of the continent. It was also included in the Romanian intellectuals' discourse on the opportunity and signification of assuming European institutional models, being the object of critical debates reflected in the theory of "forms without substance" of the intellectual and conservative politician Titu Maiorescu. The debate he started offers to this day an efficient scheme for interpreting theorizations on the change, innovation and applicability of the various institutions of the Romanian state.

There are also debatable elements that were legalized through the 1866 Constitution. They refer to the limitation of some significant civil freedoms,

⁵³ Text from Iancu and Muraru, *Constituțiile române*, 31–59. The German version of the text can be found in Schmidt, *Die verfassungsrechtliche und politische Struktur des rumänischen Staates in ihrer historischen Entwicklung*, 128–40.

such as excluding the right of Jews to gain naturalization and the legislation of exceptions in the case of peasants who did not have access to a normal legal path in point of disputes around leasing contracts. Because of these reasons, the Constitution represented a regress from the one elaborated during the 1848 events in Wallachia, one in which the emancipation of the Jews and the Rroma had been promulgated alongside the idea of social justice. The above-mentioned limitations could not be dropped because Moldavian leaders threatened they would revoke the union in case Jews obtained the right of naturalization. Union and the propagation of national understanding in an ethno-cultural sense were of priority. Christianization was a first step on the path of naturalization or, more precisely, assimilation. As to the significance of the union, article 1 of the constitution noted: "The united principalities make up a unitary and indivisible state which is called Romania." The nation's unity was beyond the explosive agrarian problem, while there was no social consensus as to ways of solving this issue.

Liberal-radicals, conservatives from among the low and middle boyars, as well as a small group of intellectuals and artisans ensured their access to the government by the same 1866 Constitution. Though they ended the traditional type of power held in the hands of the great boyars, they excluded from power two social classes, Jews and peasants, who were deeply implicated in the country's economic production. Despite its progressive elements, one could affirm that the 1866 fundamental law implemented an exclusivist "national code" which specified discriminations based on criteria of religious affiliation (in the case of persons who did not belong to the Christian faith) and social inequity.⁵⁴

The Constitution was modified in 1879, 1884 and 1917, especially by the abrogation of article 7 which dealt with the refusal to naturalize Jews. This article was reconsidered as a result of external pressure, but it did not lead to a significant change of the Jewish lot and of the way they were perceived (as foreigners) in Romania. Other changes from 1884 referred to the reduction of voting colleges and the transformation of the country from a principality to a kingdom after the country declared its independence in 1877 and proclaimed itself as a kingdom in 1881. Following the political evolution during World War I and the Russian Revolution, the question of peasants and the reform of voting laws came back to the center of political attention. One of the constitutional articles regarding peasants' condition was modified in 1917 in order to maintain order.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ On this margin, see Müller's thorough study, *Staatsbürger auf Widerruf*.

⁵⁵ Focșeneanu, *Istoria constituțională a României*, 54.

The creation of Greater Romania by the incorporation of Bessarabia, Transylvania and Bukovina brought with it new integration problems that were difficult to solve from a constitutional point of view. The new Constitution from March 1923 absorbed in essence the decisions of the 1866 Constitution but, since it was unilaterally legislated by the Liberal Party from the Old Kingdom, its general acceptance was made difficult. The rejection of autonomy rights in the new provinces was already visible in 1918 when an “unconditional union” in several stages was decided upon in the case of the annexation of Bessarabia.⁵⁶ The constituent power that assembled in November 1919 and was chosen after the free elections of Romania was dissolved in March 1920. Such was also the case of the following constituent power. Thus, in 1922, the Liberal Party could ensure its majority by the old mechanisms of influencing voters.

Centralism and the idea of a unitary national state had an impact on the new regions and were expressly mentioned in article 1 of the Constitution: “The kingdom of Romania is a unitary and indivisible national State.”⁵⁷ The rights of minorities were more often guaranteed by international treaties⁵⁸ than by the Constitution, which especially guaranteed individual rights. The preservation of the meaning of the 1866 Constitution also meant the maintenance of the political mechanisms of the Old Kingdom. They no longer had the same stabilizing and integrative effect from the previous period, because the economic and social conditions were significantly different. The absence of political consensus in the case of the 1923 Constitution was noticed on the occasion of the crisis of the royal house (1926) and on Charles II’s return (1930), and it was due to the terrorist actions of the Legionary movement in point of its effects on the legal system. Originating with the 1848 revolutionary movements, the aggressive nationalist discourse aimed to search for a specific Romanian identity and refused to adopt the Western model invoking its so-called disagreement with Romanian traditions.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Cf. “Dispozițiile Sfătului Țării în Basarabia” [The dispositions of Bessarabia’s Council] from 27 March 1918 and 27 November 1918, in Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 466, 468.

⁵⁷ Iancu and Muraru, *Constituțiile române*, 63.

⁵⁸ Berceanu, *Istoria constituțională a României*, 291.

⁵⁹ For further details, and for the stages of the birth of the national idea and Romanian nationalism, see Neumann, “The Concept of Nation in the Romanian Culture and Political Thought,” 153–76. For an exemplification of the former interest in becoming aware of a Romanian communitarian identity and the formulation of its political ideals in Transylvania, see Neumann, “Exegeza trecutului ca militantism politic. Cazul gândirii lui

Hybrid Authoritarian Constitutional Structures (1938–1947)

The 1930s crisis of the state and society led to the elaboration of the new Constitution of 1938 decreed by Charles II. It represented an infringement of the basic principles of the 1866 constitutional idea. The principle on which the 1866 and 1923 constitutions had been based—the one that asserted that “the king reigns, he does not govern” (“le roi règne et ne gouverne pas”)—proved to be useless for the Romania of 1938.⁶⁰ The new royal Constitution was based on the principles of the authoritarian rule of the corporatist state and on a rejection of individualism, parliamentarianism, and political parties. A fundamental semanticist opposition could be found in the phrases “authoritarian regime” vs. “parliamentary regime,” “individualism” vs. “a solidaritarian conception upholding the pre-eminence of Romanian ethnicity,” “the German theory of the state” vs. “the French theory of the revolution.”⁶¹ The connotations of this Constitution referred to the sick state of Romanian politics and society before 1938.⁶²

This did not annul all individual rights, but it modified their relation to a unitary society divided into several corporations. It was followed by the banning of existent political parties and the establishment of a single party. The separation of state powers no longer existed, and authority and the power of decision were concentrated in the king’s hands. Uniformity at all levels was in opposition with diversity. People made reference to Alexandru Ioan Cuza’s constitutional model from 1863 (and his Statute from 1864) as a historical model; he therein stipulated that governing could only be done by means of the ruler and by the people’s direct legitimation of the new order (the appeal to the people).⁶³ Also from a linguistic and semantic point of view, the 1938 Constitution was interpreted as a “statute,” or more precisely a manifestation of the monarch’s will that borrowed other archaic expressions: “a new constitutional settlement” (“o nouă așezare constituțională”) or “the constitutional establishment”

Ioan Budai Deleanu” [The exegesis of the past as political militantism. The case of Ioan Budai Deleanu’s thought], in *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie George Barițiu din Cluj-Napoca* XLVII (2008): 345–61.

⁶⁰ *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, 192 (Paul Negulescu, The Constitution of Romania).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 198, 200a.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 196 (Charles II’s manifesto from 21 February 1938: “Today I present to my people the new Constitution which is meant to lay a more solid and just groundwork for our State and to lead communitarian life to a more secure, freer and healthier path”).

⁶³ *Enciclopedia României*, vol. I, 200b, 200c.

(“așezământul constituțional”).⁶⁴ Given the conditions of its elaboration and the content of the constitution, it could not claim legitimation on the part of the country’s political elites.⁶⁵ Charles II’s Constitution was suspended as a result of the 1940 territorial surrender in favor of the Soviet Union and Hungary and following its author’s stepping down from the political scene.

General Ion Antonescu led Romania from 1940 until 1944 in the absence of a constitution and in the context of a provisional legislation. He established or modified the basic principles of government by means of decrees whose legitimacy consisted in the dictatorial authority of the general which was conferred by a royal decree and officialized by the position of “leader of the Romanian state,” one which had been unknown until then. Antonescu had characterized both his appointment in that position on 5 September 1940 and Charles II’s actual abdication on 6 September 1940 as two *coups d’état*.⁶⁶ The position of the new king Michael I was limited to a purely representative function. The key-concepts of the period were *the new regime* (including its attributes of being *clean, harmonious, fraternal, full of ideals, creative*), *order* (“order from above asks for order from below”), *sacrifice* and *fraternity*. They all aimed at the moral elevation of the people and its unity in the case of ideals about honor, work and justice.⁶⁷

The Legionary Movement was the only political organization admitted and ordained through the decree regarding the formation of *the national legionary state* (November 1940–February 1941), so that “any fight among brothers should cease” starting with the decree from 14 September 1940.⁶⁸ The regime of horror instituted by the legionaries was suppressed by Antonescu in February 1941, but the marginalization, persecution and murder of Jews continued in the register initiated by the legionaries. It was not a constitutional order that was recognized as legitimate, but the difficulties during the war which determined the duration of Antonescu’s regime. The general was removed from power on 23 August 1944 under Soviet pressure. The government was taken over by a coalition of parties including one that was in full process of establishing itself, the Romanian

⁶⁴ Ibid., 195.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 196, 200e.

⁶⁶ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, cit. ed., 658. See also *Enciclopedia de istorie a României*, 21.

⁶⁷ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, cit. ed., 658–9, 663.

⁶⁸ 23 August 1944. *Documente 1939–1943*, vol. I (Bucharest: Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984), 122.

Communist Party. Following King Michael I's decisions, Romanian armies turned against the fascists and a royal decree from August 1944 officialized the old Constitution from 1923. Its dispositions regarding the separation of state powers and the guarantee of civil rights were again undermined in 1947, after the fraudulent rise to power of communists with the support of the Soviet Union. The already mentioned constitution, which offered equilibrium in respect to the new political tendencies, could only be sustained by the institution of monarchy. King Michael I's forced abdication on 30 December 1947, threats of violence, and staged parliamentary debates⁶⁹ paved the way towards the proclamation of the Romanian Popular Republic, a communist state whose legal status is today questioned.

Communist Constitutions (1948–1989)

The Constitutions from 1948, 1952 and 1965 meant a change of paradigm in regards to the content, language and semantics of the constitutional text, one that was imposed and controlled by the exercise of external pressure. The concept of *constituție* (*constitution*) was preserved but its sense referred to a totally different social and political reality for Romanians. The Constitutions sanctioned the establishment of the Popular Republic on the Soviet model (*democratic regime*, *regime of popular democracy*, *popular-democratic state*) and often referred to the working class.⁷⁰ The notion of *democratic* designated the cessation of man's exploitation by man through a detour of meaning.⁷¹ The new constitution claimed that it was legitimated by the power of the Soviet Union, a point of view explicitly mentioned in the introductory chapter to the 1952 constitution.⁷²

The semantic fields of the communist era concepts, namely *work*, *socialism* or *party*, must be thoroughly analyzed in point of their evolution in respect to general constitutional principles. Individual rights continued to be legally recognized, but they were interpreted in conformity with the principles of the socialist order and were thought in similar terms to the 1938 Constitution, by their association with the corporatist state. Another conceptual field problematic for the Romanian discourse focused on the

⁶⁹ Focșeneanu, *Istoria constituțională a României*, 108.

⁷⁰ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 762.

⁷¹ Iancu and Muraru, *Constituțiile române*, 134.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 133.

nation and the theoretical evolution of this concept during the communist era. Under the circumstances, the name of the Romanian state as “a unitary, sovereign and independent state” was kept, and the concept of *nation* together with its derivatives was replaced by the concept of *people*. At the same time, a law of nationalities was instituted in 1948 and 1952, one that reevaluated the old law of minorities from 1945.⁷³ For instance, article 19 of the 1952 Romanian Constitution established the autonomous Hungarian region. The reevaluation of the concept of (ethnic) *Romanian nation* appeared in the 1965 Constitution by the dissociation from the principles of socialist internationalism and the claim of Soviet authority. Article 1 of the Constitution abrogated minorities’ rights to autonomy and once again postulated an indivisible and inalienable state territory. The extreme nationalist discourse of Nicolae Ceaușescu was largely developed outside the scope of the Constitution.⁷⁴ We should try to find out to what degree Ceaușescu’s wish to legitimate his position through a nationalist discourse corresponded or not to his real intention to attribute to himself a charismatic authority.

In Search of a Constitutional Consensus (since 1991)

A new kind of discourse emerged after the overthrow of the communist dictatorship in 1989. The new order to be established contained numerous reference points: the return to the principles of an interwar constitutional order; a distancing from the communist period; and the model of a European community of fundamental values. What is surprising in the case of frequently used expressions after the revolution, such as *restructuration*, *reorganization*, and *reestablishment*, is the use of the prefix “re-” which suggested a rupture from communist institutions and a state and social organization based upon democratic principles. The concepts of *pluralist*, *liberal*, and *humanist* were placed in opposition with “socialist democracy.”⁷⁵ The concept of *dignity* equally played an important role; it referred to an ethical value that had been regained after the Romanian Revolution from 1989 and which placed communism under the sign of immorality.

⁷³ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 720.

⁷⁴ Not *national* but *socialist* represented the core notion that was preserved and which was due to the fundamental ideological principles of socialism. See, for instance, the oath of the state’s president, in Iancu and Muraru, *Constituțiile române*, 170.

⁷⁵ Ionescu, *Dezvoltarea constituțională a României*, 834.

Despite the existent consensus surrounding democratic values, there were serious problems of legitimation in the case of the 1991 Constitution. It had been conceived by The National Salvation Front and influenced by the political orientation of its leader, the future president of Romania, Ion Iliescu. What they needed to debate was the establishment of the state form, namely a republic that did not have to become the object of a revision (article 146). The dispositions regarding the “national, independent, unitary and indivisible character” of the state were stipulated in article 1 and were consolidated in article 4 of the same Constitution by specifying the idea that the state is based on the unity of the Romanian people.⁷⁶ Even though this was a democratic context that was different from the previous regime, the character of the state and the status of minorities did not undergo any major changes. The position of the president was also a controversial one since the constitutional definition following the French model was to be oriented in conformity with the decisions of the 1965 Constitution. In this sense, a comparative analysis of the constitutions elaborated during the transitional periods between 1918 and 1923 and between 1989 and 1991 could bring interesting results regarding the failure of a federal state (1923) and a parliamentary democracy (1991).

Once we manage to notice the efficiency or inefficiency of mechanisms trying to solve the conflicts between the parliament, the government and the president, we will be able to assess the legitimacy of a “semi-presidential republic.”⁷⁷ At the same time, the dispute regarding the power of decision, which was mainly attributed to the parliament or president, has not yet met a consensus and, thus, it is not a closed issue. Meanwhile, Romanian constitutional history has kept alive the controversies regarding the power ratio between the chief of state (monarch/party president/president) and the state representatives (representatives of boyars/parliament/national assembly/party assembly), between the state and the exemplary foreign decision-making body (the European West, the EU) or between the state and a coercive power (the Ottoman Empire, the Tsarist Empire, the Soviet Union).

⁷⁶ Iancu and Muraru, *Constituțiile române*, 85.

⁷⁷ Focșeneanu, *Istoria constituțională a României*, 162.

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The Concept of *National Style* in Artistic Historiography. Asserting a Critical Vocabulary

Ruxandra Demetrescu

I was born to see,
And tell what I have seen.

Ion Frunzetti

An analysis of the concept of *national style* within interwar Romanian artistic historiography could be significant for introducing a new dimension of study within the current debates on *the national* and *nationalism*. My paper aims to identify the way in which a *national Romanian specific style*—as different from the “great” Western model—was created in the interwar period in the field of fine arts, within which painting represented the main paradigm. After a century of Westernization of Romanian art, which basically meant its renunciation to the post-Byzantine model and the return to a classical visual culture, Romanian art scholars began to increasingly focus on the search for autochthonous roots. This soon led to the critique and negation of Western “gains.” In this sense, it is interesting to note that interwar Romanian artistic literature was more relevant than the image offered by the time’s painting. The latter was largely consonant with new classicism, a phenomenon that dominated the post-World War I Western artistic world under the sign of a return to (classical) order (“le retour à l’ordre.”)

Starting with Ioana Vlasiu’s studies,¹ Romanian historiography has attempted to clarify the significance of the new classicism characterizing Romanian art in conjunction with the problem of tradition and national specificity. Recently, the concept of *tradition* acquired an exacerbated meaning in the context of a problematized avant-garde that resulted from

¹ See especially Vlasiu, *Anii 20*.

Erwin Kessler's "retro-garde" formulation.² Given this, one should clarify how and by what theoretical means the artistic discourse in Romanian interwar culture developed. To this end, I will first discuss the role and place of the history of art as a universal field of study in order to correctly assess the specific dimensions of Romanian artistic historiography. The concepts I will problematize are: *national specificity*, *artistic historiography*, and *artistic literature*.

History of Art as a Privileged Theoretical Field

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the neo-Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain wrote about the possible dialogue that could be established between philosophers and artists, in order to find the spiritual conditions for an honest endeavor in an era which urgently needed to exit the immense intellectual confusion that was a legacy from the nineteenth century.³ Despite its cultural and academic success, Hans Belting announced the end of art history.⁴ Between these two radical stands, one could find the spectacular development of art historiography in the twentieth century. In Ernst Heidrich's footsteps, Hans Sedlmayr wrote about "the fulfillment of the dream according to which artistic historiography finally oriented itself towards the modern sciences of the mind. This was due to the atemporal quality of its object as well as to the fact that it was determined by history."⁵ In a survey of the field, Herman Bauer explained the progresses that were favored by the new fields of study, such as psychology and the theories of perception and expression. Sketching a history of art,⁶ Dagobert Fry defined it as the object of art itself, as the history of art history and a field of study that problematized *when* and *how* a historiographical perspective emerges. The most important art historians would be those that could go beyond the pure practice of art history and ponder over the methods and significance of art starting from the question: What is the nature of art and artistic creation?

From the perspective of art history, modernity has been defined as a rejection of classicizing academicism; scholars have chronologically and

² Kessler, "Retro-garda."

³ Maritain, *Art et scolastique*, 3.

⁴ Belting, *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte*, 7.

⁵ Sedlmayr, "Kunstgeschichte als Wissenschaft," 199.

⁶ Fry, "Probleme einer Geschichte der Kunstwissenschaft," 35.

geographically circumscribed it to the period between the French painting of the 1860s and the American art of the 1960s.⁷ Some authors even suggest that the debut years of the new era of art occurred around the 1800s.⁸ This was so since “the time of beauty ha[d] passed,” following Goethe’s appraisal from his diary of Italian journeys on 7 October 1786, which almost prophetically announced the deep changes which occurred during the nineteenth century.

The already-mentioned change was to manifest itself in the separation of official art from oppositional art. The resulting gain consisted in the freedom to choose one’s topics and means of expression. In *Aesthetics*, Hegel noted how the relation of art with a specific content and technique now disappeared and art itself became a free tool of expression.⁹

Modernity consecrated art as a radical form of fulfillment given its primary search for the new and the unexpected, and especially its assertion of rupture and difference (*Unterscheidung*).¹⁰ It presupposes the definition of each remarkable moment that inaugurates a new creation in relation to the previous one. In this view, the aim of art history is to describe and analyze subsequent modernities from a pluralist perspective without hierarchizing them or making any judgment of value.¹¹

The Birth of Modernity in Romanian Art

In *Byzance après Byzance*, Nicolae Iorga supported the continuity of the Byzantine civilization, one that “had survived for almost four centuries in the face of the Christian imperial form.” The causes of the disappearance of the above-mentioned civilization should be found among Western influences, especially in:

[that] double-edged state of mind that was harmful for a Byzantinism which could have resisted all dangers until then: on the one hand, there was the freedom nineteenth-century French philosophers preached in more or less special senses and as

⁷ Charles Harrison, “Modernism,” in *Critical Terms in Art History*, edited by Robert S. Nelson, and Richard Shiff (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 142–55.

⁸ Hofman, *Das irdische Paradies*, 46–47.

⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, edited by Rüdiger Bubner (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2008), 670.

¹⁰ Silvermann, “Le postmodernisme comme modernité,” 485.

¹¹ Court, “La modernité esthétique en plein séisme,” 368.

enemies of religious influences and historical authorities; on the other hand, there was the freedom that would gradually derive from the cult of new abstractions, from revolutionary internationalism and organic notions that had the right and duty to live by themselves.¹²

Ion Frunzetti believed that the beginnings of modern Romanian art coincided with the beginnings of a Western-type state life in the Romanian Principalities:

If the belief in individualism brought about by revolutionary ideas that were getting hold of early nineteenth-century Europe had not imposed the idea of freedom, dignity and global human mission within the domain of art, most likely the routine art that had been practiced on the Romanian territory after the standard canons of an aging Byzantinism would have never been renewed.¹³

Modernity imposed a new model of behavior. It installed itself in the Romanian space from the second half of the nineteenth century starting with Theodor Aman's works. He imposed the model of the official artist and the dignity of "liberal art" asserted through its consecration by the academy, the museum, the exhibition, and the atelier.

A first sign of anti-academicism and radical artistic renewal came from the painter Nicolae Grigorescu. Following the paradox of Romanian culture, the de-construction and re-construction of artistic institutionalization occurred in Romania within two decades only, between 1860 and 1880. It is thanks to Grigorescu's works that one can speak of the transition from Romanian art's belatedness to its synchronization with international art. The stages of his biography—that range from his role of an average icon-painter to that of a Barbizon painter—show the way in which he assimilated and went beyond the lessons of classical and romantic art. Grigorescu was the first great landscape painter in a century which measured its renewal by the re-autonomization of the genre, among other things. He was then consecrated as a national painter and managed to impose the authenticity of the rural world and eluded the exotic tone that had characterized artists before him. His artistic biography is exemplary and ranges from icon painting to impressionist works that go beyond traditions, retrograde styles, or Barbizonism, and are converted in the artist's own specific manner of the "plainerist" style.

In the historiography of Romanian art, Nicolae Grigorescu represents a first, genuine legend. Though not a professor, the painter had numerous

¹² Iorga, *Bizanț după Bizanț*, 11.

¹³ Frunzetti, "Structura artei românești" [The structure of Romanian art], in *Pegas între meduză și Perseu*, vol. II., 187.

epigones and became the subject of a symptomatic debate in the 1930s. The lesson he transmitted was that of being blessed with a privileged eye or, to use the painter and theoretician Hans von Marées's words, *Sehen lernen ist alles*. This was his conviction. The Romanian view of art developed as a historiography and artistic creation during the twentieth century; it did so in direct relation to its spectacular modernization and Westernization. The already-mentioned modernization/Westernization was also accompanied by debates surrounding, on the one hand, national specificity, and on the other, synchronism.

Theoretical Recuperations

The most often studied art historians of the nineteenth century were: Alois Riegl, Adolf Hildebrand, Konrad Fiedler, Wilhelm Worringer, Heinrich Wölfflin, and Max Dvorak. In the Romanian artistic milieu, Alois Riegl's works *Stilfragen*, *Spätromische Kunstindustrie* and *Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom* became known during the interwar period and were valorized in art works.

Changes in Romanian culture from the first half of the twentieth century were initiated by the Germanophone philosophical and aesthetic formation of Tudor Vianu, Lucian Blaga, Ștefan Nenițescu, Oskar Walter Cisek, and Simionescu Râmniceanu. Their students Ion Frunzetti and Mircea Popescu proved to possess a vast culture that encompassed the era's philosophical questions. For instance, Ștefan Nenițescu made the conjunction with Italian aesthetics, particularly with that of Benedetto Croce. In light of this, one could identify three categories of "beneficiaries" of the science of art: 1) philosophers, aestheticians, and great speculative thinkers (Tudor Vianu, Lucian Blaga, Ștefan Nenițescu), who are the object of my investigation to the degree to which they practiced critical thinking or had an influence on artists and art critics; 2) art historians and critics of theoretical vocation, among whom I remember Ion Frunzetti, the most consistent "formalist" of Romanian culture; 3) artists who were also theoreticians such as, for instance, Francisc Șirato.

Tudor Vianu's interest in fine arts was constant and determinant. His writings on Romanian sculpture did not simply represent cases of occasional publications but a meditation on genre and artistic calling, both of which were problematized in relation to *traditional aspects*, *national specificity* and the *modernity* of Romanian art. Vianu also wrote essays on the great European movements from the first half of the twentieth century,

the most interesting piece being dedicated to expressionism.¹⁴ The scholar recognized that in 1890s Vienna, Alois Riegl was the promoter of a new doctrine denouncing negative elements, such as material, technique and goal, as coefficients of friction (*Reibungskoeffizient*) standing in the way of the creator's freedom:

What truly determines the emergence of styles is a certain artistic will (*Kunstwollen*), which is reliable and aware of its goal. The original soul represented by the artist becomes conscious of his new attitude and gives it a certain expression thanks to his perfect will. In this sense, expressionists remembered the theories of Alois Riegl.¹⁵

Vianu valorized the example of Alois Riegl in the context of the opposition impression vs. expression and of one's relation to nature. While Riegl claimed that art is not a record of nature but a competition with nature, Herwarth Walden held that "art is talent, not reproduction" ("Kunst ist Gabe, nicht Wiedergabe"). In the view of the expressionists, after being gradually freed from the grasp of nature, "the artist will not focus again on the issue of similarity with nature [...]. Totally independent [...] he will organize an expression out of the material at his disposal by means of shapes and colors." Vianu deemed that Riegl's idea of art was transformed into "an artistic instinct."¹⁶

This valorization of Alois Riegl offers significant approaches that can be used in analyzing the relation between Impressionism and Expressionism, and it has been symptomatic in the critical discourse of the avant-garde. Impressionism was criticized in the 1920s in the name of a new formal conscience, "new classicism," and the recuperation of tradition. The distinction between the terms of *impression* and *feeling* accompanies the one that contradicts the opposition between naturalism and idealism and promotes the autonomy of the artwork. The phrase "artistic instinct" is complemented by that of "absolute painting" defining Expressionism.

In "Notes on Cubism" from *Modern Fragments*, Tudor Vianu wrote:

The fraternization with the Orient is one of the favorite motifs of the cubist theories. It is part of the complex interest that moderns have been conferring on Asian art for decades. Yet, if indeed Picasso's abstractionism, for instance, expresses a new moment of the domination of the Oriental religious attitude, then a new need for ascesis and a new pessimism regarding knowledge only live as hypotheses. The former could be analyzed as an interesting chapter in modern mysticism.¹⁷

¹⁴ Vianu, *Fragmente moderne*, 21–28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

This means that the author sanctioned Worringer's theory of empathy and the limitation of aesthetic sympathy as processes in understanding Greek-Roman art.

Given the high impact of a unanimously recognized speculative authority and the unmediated interest in the artistic phenomenon as well as in contacts with artists among Romanian thinkers, Ștefan Nenițescu had the highest influence on criticism and artists. In Nenițescu's view, the philosophy of art could only be established upon a description of art, and aesthetics could be nothing else than a history of art. His not completely fulfilled ambition to build a system in which aesthetics was history, more precisely a history of aesthetics, and in which the axis of reasoning was represented by fine arts, became materialized in his book *Istoria artei ca filozofie a istoriei* (Art history as a philosophy of history). Art history did not only represent a history of visibility, but it revealed the meaning of knowledge, since for Nenițescu no other activity was more logical than the artistic one. Convinced of "the undefeatable logic" marking "the evolution of art history," Nenițescu tried to make an ambitious synthesis of visibility and historicity.

Scholars have claimed that *Art History as a Philosophy of History* did not have the expected impact because of the bulky, difficult character of its discourse and its abuse of quotations. Reading this book from the perspective of present-day sciences can reveal that its eclectic dimension was tributary to its author's remarkable erudition. According to Nenițescu, intuitive knowledge is not a "rudimentary" "step of the other types of knowledge," but a "direct" and "fresh" one. Knowledge plays a formative role and gets systematized through creation, which is defined by: 1) the gathering of material; 2) the coincidence between the representation of forms and their existence; 3) the relation between activity and localization; 4) conscious systematization.¹⁸

Francisc Șirato coined the concept of "formal conscience"¹⁹ that could be identified in all the stages of Romanian art as some form of atemporal essence that drew the contours of national styles, manifesting itself in its "avoiding of naturalist forms," "the propensity for the abstract" and "the release of structure and of the essence of form" from the ornamental ballast. The concept of *formal conscience* as thought by Șirato represents one of the best examples of the fruition of the theoretical dimension. As a reference point he uses Worringer's conception about understanding expressionism as a national art, and *formal conscience* could be read in the

¹⁸ Nenițescu, *Istoria artei ca filozofie a istoriei*, 16–17.

¹⁹ Șirato, "Arta plastică românească."

spirit of artistic will promoted by Alois Riegl, one which circulated within interwar Romanian culture.²⁰ A modern spirit, Șirato was never an adept of avant-garde experiments, and his classicizing position imposed the cult of form and the valorization of tradition. On the other hand, his writings demonstrate the social dimension of art: the goal of creation is not pure pleasure, but the demand to be “a source of sensorial satisfaction with moral consequences.” In his critical works, he claimed that the mission of painting was to speak that “new language” which was in accordance with national specificity: “a people’s art enters the international public field as a cultural element when it manages to assert its own character.”²¹ Analyzing the work of Nicolae Grigorescu, Șirato concluded that Grigorescu was the first artist who discovered Romanian specificity in the characteristics of shapes and colors.²² The same Francisc Șirato further noted:

Grigorescu does not imitate anyone; [...] he is interested in learning how to look at nature. Only the education of sight will allow him to reach an artistic vision and he has taken greater pains to educate his sight than any other Romanian painter, including even Andreescu.²³

Șirato’s work also included other suggestions:

The results Grigorescu obtained were due to his direct contact with nature, one which was visual rather than rational and hence broader than that of Luchian or Andreescu. In order to grasp all the secrets of nature’s aspects, and so as to push the analysis of natural phenomena to their last consequence, the painter’s eye must possess a special conformation as well as extreme sensitivity. Grigorescu had this privilege and thus he knew how to transcend the barrier of raw impressionism which means an undifferentiated form of art.²⁴

The privileged eye reminds one of the *ominöses Sehen* of Marées, and the criticism of impressionism could be linked to Fiedler’s criticism of naturalism.²⁵

²⁰ See Blaga, “Concepte fundamentale în știința artei,” 134–43: the author therein sanctions the trajectory of thinkers of “conscience” by citing, for instance, Wöfflin’s concepts as means of applying a so-called artistic will in the footsteps of Riegl. See also, Blaga, “Năzuința formativă,” 138–66, in which style is defined as a philosophical category in the conjunction between the axiological tone with anabasic and catabasic attitudes and formative aspirations.

²¹ Șirato, “Spre o artă națională,” 30.

²² Șirato, “Momentul istoric și cultural în pictura românească,” 45.

²³ Șirato, F., “Grigorescu, tradus de V. Beneș” [Grigorescu, translated by V. Beneș], in Jianu and V. Beneș, (eds.), *Mărturii despre Grigorescu*, 131.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁵ The rejection of impressionism is a *topos* of Romanian interwar artistic thought in the context of the promotion of “new classicism.” Șirato and Cisek are the most authoritar-

In 1943, Ion Frunzetti wrote a study that meant to offer a synthesis on *The Structure of Romanian Art* throughout its two chapters, "The Process of Constituting a Style" and "Constants of the Romanian School of Painting."²⁶ He analyzed Romanian paintings through the terms of a critical vocabulary derived from pure visuality, so that Nicolae Grigorescu considered that one characteristic would be "distant vision" (*Fernsicht*).²⁷ He adopted from the vocabulary of Alois Riegl the oppositions tactile vs. optical, close vision vs. distant vision, which had become *leitmotifs* in the above-mentioned critical discourse. The use of Wölfflin's terms could also be noted whenever he analyzed the plastic style and the linear style in order to assert Romanians' appeal to picturality.²⁸ The most interesting adoption from the doctrine of pure visuality was represented by the affirmation of the conjunction between art and knowledge. Speaking in anti-nomic terms, in comparison with Nicolae Grigorescu and Ștefan Luchian, Ion Frunzetti considered art as "a cut in the realm of knowledge." He defined Nicolae Grigorescu as "a dogmatic of senses" and Ștefan Luchian as "a critic who judges his sensations."²⁹

The discourse on Romanian art as constituted from the 1920s onwards offered the image of a youthful thought that had just been trained in the area of specialized and autonomous artistic theory and criticism. For instance, Ion Frunzetti's efforts were directed towards the creation of "a civilization of sight" and "a critical responsibility." He considered criticism as being "history, philosophy and art" and defined it as "a philosophical thought having art and the artist as object of study."³⁰

The Romanian view of art was dominated by and obsessed with the generic-cultural dimension concretized in the issues of tradition, *Romanian soul* and *national specificity*. During the interwar years, Romanian culture was in full process of affirming *the national feeling* and its roots. Politics and aesthetics met in a nationalist ethos: writers and historians now focused on historical, religious and rural topics, using landscape as a mark of identity. Symbols, traditions and myths were called to define the unique content of national identity, outlined in light of Romanian cultural values.

ian and authorized voices of this discourse. See, Șirato "De ce moare impresionismul?," and Cisek, "Luchian și depășirea impresionismului."

²⁶ The study was republished in Frunzetti, *Pegas între meduză și Perseu*, vol. II, 187–214.

²⁷ Ibid., 193.

²⁸ Ibid., 204–5.

²⁹ Ibid., 203.

³⁰ Frunzetti, "Șansele teoretice ale criticii de artă," 3–9, in "Pegas între meduză și Perseu," vol. II, 219.

This epoch was marked by heated debates around the ideas of tradition and *national specificity*: Ion Mincu theorized and applied the principles of a “neo-Romanian” architectural style; Alexandru Tzigara-Samurçaș laid the foundations of a museum of national art; George Oprescu published the volume entitled *Peasant Art in Romania*, an attempt to define the essential component of the creativity of the Romanian people. The image of Romanian identity presented at the International Exhibition in 1937 foregrounded the idea of the integration of the rural world within modernity: the rural world was seen as being alive, real, and free from naïve idyllism.³¹ In the same exhibition, Tzigara-Samurçaș organized a “national museum”: he authoritatively imposed rural civilization and generated an efficient image that would be adopted by the Western press, reminding that Romanian artists had made a synthesis between Western techniques and national traditions by favorably combining Byzantine splendors with poetry and contemporary color.³²

The discourse on art and its functions was dominated by a primarily traditionalist dimension, which in the case of Nichifor Crainic went as far as to gain anti-modernist and anti-Western tones. In Crainic’s view, the negativism of modern culture and the autonomy of aesthetic values led to a crisis of art which lost its role of “a caressing substitute.” He defined artistic activity as creation born out of “the nostalgia for paradise,” whose role was to compensate for the absence of the supreme beautiful.³³ Crainic considered that art’s independence from nature was a “mirror” of the world beyond, one that implicitly had moral content.³⁴

In the 1920s, *national specificity* and *the recuperation of tradition* appeared as a symptomatic discourse rejecting impressionism, which was seen as an impersonal style that was incapable to capture *the Romanian soul*. Francisc Șirato discussed spiritual identity in terms of specific geography and asserted that “our country does not offer the natural conditions of light and a climate that would be propitious to this art genre. We do not have the twinkling environment filled with sunlight that characterizes the French milieu.”³⁵ Divergent opinions also existed in the search for *tradition* and for a specifically Romanian creative dimension. In 1924, Șirato published an essay entitled “Romanian Fine Arts” in the magazine *Gândirea* (*Thought*),

³¹ Vlad, *Imagini ale identității naționale*, 113.

³² *Ibid.*, 117–19.

³³ Crainic, *Nostalgia paradisului*, 179–90.

³⁴ Șirato, “Arta în conformitate cu natura,” 63.

³⁵ Șirato, “De ce moare impresionismul?,” 61.

and Marin Simionescu-Râmnicăanu wrote “Do We Have a National Art?” in *Ideea europeană* (The European Idea). Râmnicăanu considered that the characteristic feature of the artistic evolution of the “Romanian kin” was “adaptability,” which had manifested itself in painting by the importation of a *style*, namely Impressionism. Thus was born the penchant for landscape and picturality in Romanian art. In a more comprehensive study, the same author would resume the criticism of autochthonous artistic production that was “at the beck and call of foreigners.”³⁶ He was to probe the indifference of “the enlightened Romanians” to *Romanian specificity*. As a consequence, national paintings “taken over the borders would not draw viewers’ attention by their specificity.” This was the case because of the adaptability of Romanian artists who only chose those aspects of Romanian landscapes that “looked like” Western ones.³⁷

Francisc Șirato shared the same negative view of Impressionism and denounced its “intellectual shortsightedness, comparable to an ocular myopia” as guilty of the assertion that “we have no national art.”³⁸ *National consciousness* was identifiable in three stages: popular art, Byzantine art and modern art.

In his turn, Henri Focillon recognized “the three stages and the three worlds of a people’s thought” which could be deciphered in popular and religious art, modern painting and sculpture.³⁹ The art historian’s advice to his Romanian painter friends is worth mentioning—he urged them to pay more attention to the frescos of Moldavian monasteries than to the Normandy landscapes preferred by their impressionist compatriots. Apart from Western influences, Romanian art critics also noticed the autochthonous dimension of modern painting, especially the virtues of national artists such as Nicolae Grigorescu, Ion Andreescu and Ștefan Luchian. Hence emerged a discourse in which modernity was discussed in more nuanced terms; it was fructified and converted to a *specific* Romanian dimension. For instance, Aurel Broșteanu asserted that Nicolae Grigorescu was “the first interpreter of our ethnicity who used the language of colors as medium.”⁴⁰ Alexandru Busuioceanu also published a study dedicated to Romanian modern art⁴¹ in which he tried to retrace the

³⁶ Simionescu-Râmnicăanu, “Caracterele naționale ale artei românești,” 27–40.

³⁷ Ibid., 36.

³⁸ Șirato, “Arta plastică românească,” 38.

³⁹ Focillon, “L’Art et l’histoire en Roumanie,” 27.

⁴⁰ Broșteanu, *Acest altceva... pictura*, 14.

⁴¹ The study first appeared in *L’Europe de L’Est et du Sud-Est*, no. 3–4 (1933): 182–202; reprinted in (and here quoted from) Busuioceanu, *Scriseri despre artă*, 76–79.

historical trajectory of Romanian painting and identify its particularizing features.⁴²

Concepts under Debate: *Tradition and National Specificity*

The debates around the concepts of *tradition*, *national specificity* and Romanian stylistic constants reached a moment of maximum radicalization at the end of the 1930s. While George Oprescu offered a survey of a century of Romanian painting,⁴³ Alexandru Marcu deplored “our nonparticipation in the humanist and renaissance movement” which deprived the Romanian space of “the well-defined stylistic form primarily given by the practice of classicism.”⁴⁴ Olga Greceanu proclaimed “a thousand years of wandering” for Romanian art, given that “between 1839 and 1939 there was no longer a Romanian art.”⁴⁵

In its issue from 21 March 1938, the newspaper *Rampa* mentioned the conference on *national specificity* in Romanian painting held by Olga Greceanu at the Romanian Atheneum.⁴⁶ On this occasion, Greceanu asserted that Nicolae Grigorescu’s naturalist paintings were not the result of “forcing the Romanian spirit that was born out of a need; it was not a logical consequence, as in France, but a simple imitation because it was the rage.” She specified that “the Romanian national specifics could not be the image of a cattle-drawn cart” but would only show itself “when, irrespective of the subject, one presented a style or expressed oneself by means that would reveal a specific nationality.”⁴⁷ The author did not negate the value of Nicolae Grigorescu, who “has been our greatest painter as well as a dreamer and lover of Romanian lands”; instead she contested his quality as the founder of the Romanian school of modern painting: “One can only call as founder of the Romanian art that artist who has

⁴² Ibid., 76–77.

⁴³ Oprescu, “Un secol de pictură românească.” The five chapters of the study were presented at radiobroadcast conferences in 1938, which included the summary of the book *Pictura românească din secolul al XIX-lea* [19th-century Romanian painting] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1984). Chapter 1 described the passage from the symbolic-idealist art of ancestors to the Western realist one (6).

⁴⁴ Marcu, *Renașterea românească și Italia*, 9–10.

⁴⁵ Greceanu, *Renașterea picturii românești*, 10–11.

⁴⁶ *Rampa*, 21 March 1938. The commentator was Ionel Jianu, who signed with his initials (see the microfilm available at the Library of the Romanian Academy).

⁴⁷ Greceanu, “Specificul românesc și pictorul Grigorescu” (see the microfilm available at the Library of the Romanian Academy).

founded a school which would reflect the moral character of the Romanian people.” Her conclusion was that “We used to have a Romanian school of painting, we used to have our own style and tradition, we used to have our own specificity but we left it behind even if we had cultivated it daily for five hundred days.” The painter’s credo followed:

We know that the stable, constitutive element of Romanian specificity is Orthodoxy, so the style of our art can only be schematic, formal, abstract; only if we had continued with these traits of style, and only then, thanks to our efforts towards progress, could we have said that we have definitely laid the groundwork for a Romanian school of art, a school established on an autochthonous tradition.⁴⁸

In this equation, Nicolae Grigorescu was a “sensitive man” who “was nurtured by the French school, yet we are Orthodox while they are Catholic. They have dispersed sensitivity; we have a concentrated sensitivity because Orthodoxy imposes more passion than emotion.” In conclusion, “We admit Grigorescu’s position of great painter, but History cannot write him down as a national painter, because History must be just.” In 1938, Olga Greceanu published a book entitled *Despre specificul românesc în pictura românească* (On Romanian specificity in Romanian painting) in which she continued to be critical on “the Westernization” of Romanian art.⁴⁹

Her discourse did not propose a return to a Byzantine-type of painting but only the return to “a decorative art which would include our moral, mystical character, the abstract image of life, the belief that spontaneous art cannot solve any problem of the soul in keeping with the views of our Latin-Orthodox people but it could only solve a hieratic art” which presupposed a wide opening because “the decorative offers endless sources to the creator, and the meaning of the abstract is limitless.”⁵⁰ The appeal to tradition was combined with elements of profound modernity, which were discernible in concepts such as *decorative*, *hieratic*, and *abstract*.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ In a study from 1916, Olimp Grigore Ioan reminded that “Romanian artists had been obliged to search for inspiration in foreign sources”; as a consequence, “the current artistic movement does not have a national character” and maintains the artistic evolution *à rebours* through which “we first try to raise ourselves to the level of European civilization and only afterwards attempt to unravel the Romanian soul.” Grigorescu was an exception, though, because “he instinctually noted the true character of nature in his country and became a national artist.” See Ioan, *L’Influence étrangère chez les artistes roumains*, 10–17.

⁵⁰ See Greceanu, *Specificul național în pictură*, 20–21.

During the same period, Ionel Jianu initiated an inquiry into the painter Nicolae Grigorescu and *Romanian specificity*, which sparked responses from Lucia Dem. Bălăcescu, Alexandru Ciucurencu, Ștefan Popescu, Francisc Șirato, Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck, Frederic Storck, Theodorescu-Sion, and Victor Ion Popa. Their answers were extremely diverse. For instance, Lucia Dem. Bălăcescu did not believe that Nicolae Grigorescu epitomized *national specificity* in his art because “he was too much under the influence of Corot.” V.I. Popa held that the same Romanian artist had been a “great” one, but not a “specific” one.⁵¹ Ștefan Popescu was the most categorical of all: he claimed that “Grigorescu’s art is specifically Romanian.”⁵²

The inquiry soon turned into a wider debate. For instance, Adrian Maniu published an article in which he wondered if Nicolae Grigorescu’s oeuvre was Romanian⁵³; Nicolae Petrașcu focused on the way in which painting was represented as a Romanian national synthesis⁵⁴; Francisc Șirato wrote the monograph *Grigorescu*, and K. H. Zambaccian elaborated a study on Nicolae Grigorescu and the new generation as well as one regarding the French influence on modern painters from Romania.⁵⁵ The controversy that was born sometimes included irony: Vasile Băncilă reminded that “our most cogent painter regarding ethnicity has nonetheless become controversial to critics’ eyes: is Grigorescu a creator specific for Romanians or not?” He added that “Grigorescu’s ethnicism consists in the cosmic element or intuition within his oeuvre,” and the existentialist and emaciated formality of Byzantinism does not belong to the Romanian view to the degree in which some might think it does.”⁵⁶ In the above-mentioned article, Adrian Maniu noted that “Grigorescu is remembered only in light of a contradictory debate about the so-called subtle issue of whether or not the great Romanian artist’s work is nationally specific.”⁵⁷

⁵¹ See in what follows Jianu’s note from *Rampa*, on 28 March: “In a recently-held conference, Ms. Olga Greceanu held that Nicolae Grigorescu is not a specifically national painter because only the motif of his art is Romanian, while his style is French. We have addressed ourselves to the most renowned painters to comment on this issue” (from the microfilm available at the Library of the Romanian Academy).

⁵² The idea was soon developed in the eponymous article, Popescu, “Arta lui Grigorescu e specific românească.”

⁵³ Maniu, “E românesc Grigorescu?”

⁵⁴ Petrașcu, “Chintesența națională românească în pictură.”

⁵⁵ Zambaccian, “Pictorul Grigorescu față de noua generație.” See also Zambaccian, “Înrăurirea franceză în formația pictorilor moderni români.”

⁵⁶ Băncilă, “Moment grigorescian,” 281–87.

⁵⁷ Maniu, “E românesc Grigorescu?,” 109.

The concepts of *tradition* and *national specificity* are present in the above-quoted texts, some of which represent subtle models of image analysis. K.H. Zambaccian noted that “Corot’s naturalism became a rustic pantheism in Grigorescu’s works.” He also reminded readers of the significance of sketches as testimonies of spontaneity in Grigorescu’s poetics by citing the maestro: “One can be completely honest only in a sketch.”⁵⁸ Adrian Maniu made an original suggestion when he proposed to read the late stage of Nicolae Grigorescu’s creation—the one containing his numerous cattle-drawn carts and shepherds—under the sign of “series” paintings:

Grigorescu is at his utmost originality when he paints his series of shepherds, cattle-drawn carts and white landscapes. Just as Monet painted several series of water lilies, [...] Grigorescu proceeds similarly when he liberates himself from French painting. [...] Grigorescu’s perseverance to resume old subjects and always find something new in them proves he was a great personality within impressionism.⁵⁹

To conclude, *national specificity* has never been abandoned as a topic in Romanian art and art historiography. Perhaps it marks the Romanian conscience to the same degree that classicism marks Western art with remarkable efficiency. In other words, once we thought we had Westernized, the conscience of a Romanian soul began to make itself heard again in numerous voices, whether convincing or authoritarian.

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⁵⁸ Zambaccian, “Pictorul Grigorescu față de noua generație,” 122.

⁵⁹ Maniu, “Moment grigorescian,” 114.

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The Conceptualization of *National Character* in the Romanian Intellectual Tradition¹

Balázs Trencsényi

The present study seeks to offer an overview of the uses of the concept of “national character” in Romanian intellectual history. The choice of the topic barely needs legitimation as modern Romanian intellectual history has been continuously under the spell of defining the nation and placing Romanians on the map of Europe. The characterological discourse was one of the most obvious frameworks to make sense of national existence, fixing the auto- and hetero-stereotypes and conferring a feeling of community and collective mission on the members of the nation.

On the whole the development of the conceptualization of Romanian national character followed the general European pattern,² but also displayed some rather original discursive combinations. Characterology as an analytical device goes back to Aristotelian natural philosophy and the Hippocratic treatise, *De aere, aquis et locis*, which explored the correlation between human types and the natural environment. The ancient tradition of environmental/humoral characterology was transmitted to Renaissance scholarship by the Hellenistic author Galenus. This paradigm of climatic determination, usually serving the ideological legitimization of constitutional monarchies purportedly corresponding to the moderate climate, was developed into a complex political theory by Jean

¹ This article draws inspiration from my study, *The Terror of History. Visions of National Character in Interwar Eastern Europe*, in press. I approached some of these topics from a different perspective in my article, “Political Romanticism and National Characterology in Modern Romanian Intellectual History,” 245–70.

² For the general lines of the history of national characterology in Europe, see Leerssen and Beller eds., *Imagology*; for case-studies in different contexts see Romani, *National character and public spirit in Britain and France* and Mandler, *The English national character*. See also Trencsényi, “Imposed Authenticity,” 20–47.

Bodin. The seventeenth century also saw the blooming of character descriptions, mostly of social types, going back to another classical author, Theophrast.

The Enlightenment brought a new interest in characterological constructions. Montesquieu pondered on the relative weight of climatic determinism and education using a contrast of the North vs. the South. In the British context, Hume relativized the climatic models in the essay, *Of National Characters* (1748), stating that the social character is much more influential than the national one and advising his readers to retain a healthy dose of skepticism concerning the explanatory force of national allegiance. In the second half of the eighteenth century, one can observe the shift towards the characterization of collective entities, fusing moral philosophy with socio-cultural mapping.

A new paradigm of national characterology emerged in the context of ‘national romanticism.’ French protagonists of the radical democratic discourse in the 1830s, such as Thierry and Michelet, separated the national *genius* from the political system locating the national spirit in culture. In his *System of Logic* J. S. Mill toyed with the idea of creating a science of character. The positivist historian Buckle extolled the peculiarities of the “organic” British social and political development. Positivist thinkers both in Britain and France, such as Spencer or Taine, also used the notion of character, linking it to the interaction of environment, race and internal psychical dispositions.

The most important late-19th century scholarly paradigm all over Europe seeking to define the national character was *Völkerpsychologie* or *psychologie des peuples*. While its founding figures were seeking to undermine the nationalist arguments by pointing out the changing mental dispositions of the community, the subsequent evolution of *Völkerpsychologie* opened up the possibility of various “ethno-pedagogical” constructions, envisioning a specific “national mindset.”

The Great War brought a radicalization of nationalism all over Europe and the concomitant sharpening of auto-, and hetero-stereotyping. Leading German intellectuals participated in devising a national characterology, focusing on the notion of “*Kultur*.” In turn, the trauma of 1918 catalyzed a collectivist characterological discourse in Germany, leading to the conception of Germans as a “young” nation in opposition to the corrupted “Western civilization.”

A crucial trait of the European intellectual context of the interwar period was the unprecedented fusion of the question of character and the problematization of political modernity. In Britain, Ernest Barker used

national characterology as a theoretical framework of political education. In Spain, Ortega y Gasset or Unamuno posed the question of national specificity in relation to a philosophical and aesthetic program of cultural revival. In interwar Eastern Europe debates on national character had special significance.³ For instance, the Serbian Jovan Cvijić defined national character in terms of a geo-political and geo-morphological terminology. He constructed his “Dynaric type” originally in view of a pan-Serbian framework of identity but, after World War I he turned his discourse to support the Yugoslavist project. In the 1930s, in line with the cultural politics of supra-ethnic Yugoslavism, the Croatian philosopher Vladimir Dvorniković devised a “Yugoslav characterology.” Competing with this discourse, Nikolaj Velimirović offered a Serbian characterology linked to Orthodox fundamentalism. At the same time in Hungary various constructions of characterology were devised, from the *Geistesgeschichte*-based ones to the “ethnic ontologies” seeking to devise a normative model of the “Hungarian mindset.” In the late-1930s and early 1940s national characterology was also used as a tool by mainstream conservatives against ethno-nationalist extremism.

In the West national characterology, linked to anti-democratic essentialism, lost its popularity after World War II (with the partial exception of US and Britain where anthropologists and social psychologists, among them Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and Geoffrey Gorer supported their army by producing characterological sketches about the belligerent nations). Attempts to relaunch national characterology as an empirically testable heuristic model were made in the 1970-80s, yet the shift towards social psychology focusing on social sub-groups rather than on the nation marginalized the concept. In Eastern Europe, however, while the Stalinist regimes usually sought to destroy the interwar national intelligentsia, the emerging national communist ideological modalities relaunched some of these discursive canons.

In the following I will provide an overview of the Romanian intellectual history of the last two centuries from the perspective of the conceptual evolution of the notion of national character, identifying a number of paradigm shifts of the national discourse, starting with the rise of National Romanticism, through the anti-Romantic positivist/organicist movement of *Junimism*, the *fin-de-siècle* cultural “neo-nationalism,” the interwar

³ There is also a valuable collection of case studies about the competing discourses of the ‘national specificity’ in East-Central Europe: Banac and Verdery, *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*.

attempts of creating an ethnic ontology, down to the ‘national communist’ ideology of the 1960-80s.⁴

As in other Eastern European cases, a number of key *topoi* (such as the contrast of archaism and imported institutions, national Messianism and an increasing ‘nationalization’ of Christianity, the issue of a national philosophy and the question of historicity), emerging in the Romantic context came to play a crucial role well beyond the confines of Romantic aesthetic ideology. One can also observe the permanence of an ethno-cultural definition of the nation in rather divergent political and cultural projects. It might be argued that exactly this shared ideological framework led to the clash of various instrumentalizations of nationalism especially in the crisis-ridden 1930s. The competition of different versions of national essentialism in the “over-crowded” discursive space thus contributed to the radicalization of “ideological offers”. These conceptualizations, through a number of mediating figures, also had repercussions in the late-Communist and post-Communist period.

The Topos of National Character Before the Twentieth Century⁵

As in most European cases, some aspects of the Romanian discourse of national peculiarity can be traced back to the humanist genre of “*Descriptio*” of the land, narrating the origins and political history of the respective people, a genre which in the Danubian Principalities reached its climax in the works of the erudite Moldavian prince-scholar Dimitrie Cantemir.⁶ Naturally, the works rooted in the humanist *chorographical* paradigm had a very different discursive function and referential basis than the characterological constructions underpinning the projects of modern nationhood and state-building. The growing importance of the characterological paradigm in defining and “mapping” the nation in the late 18th century is witnessed by the discussion around the observations of the traveller and *En-*

⁴ Basic works on the evolution of Romanian identity discourses: Lucian Boia, *History and myth in Romanian consciousness*; Antohi, *Civitas Imaginalis*; Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*; Mitu, *Geneza identității naționale la românii ardeleni*; Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*.

⁵ For a more detailed analysis of the nineteenth century, see my article “History and Character,” 139–78.

⁶ See *Descriptio Moldaviae* (written between 1714 and 1716); modern edition: Cantemir, *Descriptio Moldaviae*.

cyclopédiste J. L. Carra on the history and mores of the Wallachians and Moldavians, in many ways drawing on Cantemir's work.⁷

Some references to this national individuality can be identified in the political and cultural works of the Transylvanian Greek Catholic elite in the last decades of the eighteenth century, which sought to anchor the historical-institutional identity of Transylvanian Romanians in a genealogical construction, stressing customs and behavior as the proof of continuity with the Roman colonists of Dacia.⁸ Simultaneously, the cultural-geographical literature stemming from the Danubian Principalities sought to put these polities on the map of Europe, making references to the customs of the inhabitants. Significantly, the concept of character was already politicized in the late-eighteenth century, as it was the case with the reformist discourse of the Moldavian boyar Ionică Tăutul, who deplored the loss of patriotic identification and the growth of egoism on the part of the ruling elite.⁹

In the 1820s the discourse of characterology came to the forefront as witnessed by the volume of poetry by Barbu Paris Mumuleanu,¹⁰ entitled *Caracteruri* (1825), which however did not focus on national characters but, following Theophrast and La Bruyère, dealt with the various social types of his country. The work had a sharp critical edge in view of the state of national culture, becoming explicit especially in the long introductory essay.¹¹ The Enlightenment-type critical tone is thus interwoven with a number of references to national identity, deriving the loss of common good and the flourishing of egoism from the lack of patriotism.¹²

The inherent ambiguity of these early texts dealing with the characterization of the nation was due to the presumption that Romanian "national

⁷ Lemny, *Jean-Louis Carra*, 69–88; Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture*, 27–8.

⁸ For instance, the similarity of Roman and Romanian customs is a key argument supporting the thesis of continuity in Micu Clain, *Scurtă cunoștință a istoriei românilor*, 82–92.

⁹ "Fugiți! Rușinați-vă de voi înșivă! Tânguiți-vă, că v-ați vândut haractirul!" See Tăutu, *Scrieri social-politice*, 92, quoted in Stanomir, *Nașterea Constituției*, 74. See also the 1812 memorandum quoted by Paul Cornea in which Romanians were accused of having abandoned the brave character of their ancestors ("they lost their war-drawn character"); see Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*, 134.

¹⁰ On Mumuleanu, see Popovici, *Romantismul românesc*, 95; Cornea, *Originile romantismului românesc*, 215–18, 364–75; Piru, *Istoria literaturii de la origini până la 1830*, 725–34.

¹¹ Mumuleanu, "Procurvîntare," in *Scrieri*.

¹² Ibid., 89–90.

culture” was practically non-existent, therefore the task of the elite was to create one, valorizing the character-traits of the community but making a qualitative jump. This temporal projection into the future can be seen in the work of one of the first social theoreticians, Florian Aaron (1805-1887), who argued that it is exactly patriotism that was going to create a truly national character.¹³ At the same time, rather than by reference to the political framework, nationality could only be defined in view of shared customs, thus references to national character came to be applied not only as the end-result but also of the starting point of future-oriented political projects, such as in the work of Theodor Diamant, the ideologist of the *phalanstère* at Scăieni, who, in his writings, referred to the good character (“*haracterul cel bun*”) of the Romanians as the basis of his utopian projects.¹⁴

The Romantic construction of national character became entangled in a complex negotiation between the narrative of linear progress and the critique of recent past in contrast to heroic antiquity; the cult of the West and the ambition to connect the values of modernity to the archaic culture of Romanians, the praise of ancestral customs and the growing consciousness of the unavoidable dissolution of archaic social ties.

Being in a transitory situation, between barbarism and civilization, thus became a characteristic *topos* of describing the collective self. The essays by Cezar Bolliac (*Poezia populară*, 1844; *Poezia*, 1846) described civilization based on borrowing from Western societies as a source of collective happiness, but sought to connect this to the archaism of the Romanian population, pointing out that the cultural borrowing should also take into account the national character of the given people on the receiving end of the civilizational transfer. He thus stressed the need to search for the character of every people in its folklore, penetrating to the matrix of the nation through physiognomical analysis, and taking into account climatic factors. A decade later, Bolliac proposed an even fuller theory of national character in his *Mozaicul social* (1858), defining Romanianness in terms of climatic determination. As he pointed out, the changing climate of the Danubian lands resulted in a capricious national character, the mixture of

¹³ Apart from Aaron’s famous article “*Patria, patriotul și patriotism*,” Ștefan Lemny lists a number of other examples of the use of the concept of national character such as the article “*Însușiri naționale ale englezilor și franțezilor*” (*România*, 1838), or “*Caracteristica națiilor europene*” (*Albina*, 1846). See Lemny, *Originea și cristalizarea ideii de patrie în cultura română*, 144.

¹⁴ Theodor Diamant, [Comerciu], in: Cornea and Zamfir, *Gândirea românească în epoca pașoptistă*, vol. II, 10.

barbarism and civilization, Orient (characterized by the preponderance of sentiments) and Occident (rational aspirations).¹⁵ On the whole, according to Bolliac, Romanians were fatally wedged between North and South, past and future, archaism and modernity.

In the programmatic essay by Ion C. Brătianu, entitled *Naționalitatea* (1853) we find the same clash of an evolutionary vision and the search for authentic models to emulate, mediated by the discourse of national character.¹⁶ Brătianu started from the assertion of the infinite richness of humankind, marked by the multiplicity of forms but also by the unity of human genius. In this interpretation “character” is the *differentia specifica* of nationalities—assuming physiognomic, moral and affective traits. Brătianu sought to integrate this into a stadial scheme, stressing that nations themselves were historical products, evolving towards greater difference over centuries. In antiquity, there were no real nations and thus national character itself was constituted by a historical process. This construction allowed for a complex model of ethnogenesis, also implying that modern nations were products of ethnic mixing.

The cult of national antiquity located in folklore was obviously a compensatory mechanism of intellectuals who had to face the accusation of lacking a proper historical tradition in the absence of historiographical evidence. In a letter by Dimitrie Brătianu to Jules Michelet, the author seeks to respond to the accusation of the Romanians’ lack of history, pointing out that this is just because history is understood in terms of Western historiographical production, which neglected the past of the peoples at the Eastern margins of Europe.¹⁷ The envisioned Roman-Romanian continuity puts the nation into its proper context as living antiquity *per se*, fusing the “sobriety of Sparta” with the “eloquence of Athens”: the love of liberty, attested by brigands having special social consciousness, the existence of peasant republics in the twelfth century, and the simplicity of the manners of peasants are evoked to prove this continuity in the absence of written sources.

The same claims can be found in the essay by Vasile Alecsandri, entitled “The Romanians and their Poetry.”¹⁸ Moving towards self-exotici-

¹⁵ Bolliac, “Mozaicul social,” Cornea and Zamfir, *Gîndirea românească în epoca pașoptistă*, vol. I., 451.

¹⁶ Ion C. Brătianu, “Naționalitatea,” in Cornea and Zamfir, *Gîndirea românească în epoca pașoptistă*, vol. I, 471–94.

¹⁷ Bucur, *Jules Michelet și revoluționarii români*, 123.

¹⁸ Alecsandri “Românii și poezia lor,” (1849), in Cornea and Zamfir, *Gîndirea românească în epoca pașoptistă*, vol. I, 169–89.

zation, Alecsandri stressed the patriarchal customs, fantastic beliefs, and proverbs of the people, describing them as “documents” for the way of thinking of the nation. All this had a strong impact on the canonization of Romanian folklore. In a book by the future professor of pedagogy and aesthetics, Ioan Crăciunescu, published in Paris, references to Herder are supporting the argument according to which poetry lay at the root of every archaic civilization, and especially popular poetry was the mirror of national soul.¹⁹ The Romanian predisposition towards poetry thus proved for him that this nation still existed in a state of nature.

From the mid-1860s onwards, the romantic/liberal nationalist framework of identity was challenged by a new cultural-political discourse, *Junimism*.²⁰ The *Junimist* critique of *pașoptism* meant the dissolution of the fusion of progress, local traditions, external models and the “quasi-theological” vision of historical development, although it was much less obvious how the proposed new identity-discourse would look like. One can, nevertheless, extricate some more general claims about the nature and preferred direction of the Romanian national project that characterized most of the *Junimist* intellectuals. On the whole, they asserted that the rise of modern life-style and institutions triggered the dissolution of the national character. They also stressed the epistemological break with romantic ideologies and set forth a positivist theoretical framework. As the paradigmatic scientific approach of the positivists was that of biology, the Romanian followers of this trend also stressed the naturalist and organicist theories in the social sciences. This had a considerable impact on the way nation became imagined, putting increasing emphasis on the ‘natural’ ingredients of the community, bringing together the national character with biological determinants.

From this perspective, the previous decades, which were considered to be a success story by the liberal nationalists, came to be described as a period of disintegration. This became clear from the growing gap on the one hand between the elite and the masses, on the other hand between the old patriarchal generation and the new one breaking with the past. It is important to stress, however, that the imperative of the continuity with the past did not imply the idealization of the past as a regressive utopia. Nevertheless, “national tradition” became a crucial concept—linking the normative conception of the national essence to the project of organic modernization.

¹⁹ Cratiunescu, *Le peuple Roumain d'après ses chants nationaux*.

²⁰ On Junimism, see Zub, *Junimea. Implicații istoriografice*; Ornea, *Junimea și junimismul*; Alexandrescu, “Junimea, discurs politic și discurs cultural,” in *Privind înapoi, modernitatea*; Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture*.

With the failure of the revolutionary movements of 1848 and the formation of the modern Romanian state on the basis of piecemeal political deals of the elites rather than by popular participation, the ideological composition of Romanian nationalism changed as well. This is shown by the characterological discourse of Bogdan P. Hașdeu, who continued the romantic-liberal heritage but also turned it into a more directly ethnicist direction.²¹ Using various intellectual sources ranging from philosophy to folklore, he sought to reshape the national historical narrative in view of ethnography and linguistics, the paradigmatic ‘national sciences’ fitting into the trend of general democratization.

The most ample discussion of national character is in his series of essays from 1868.²² With reference to Montesquieu Hașdeu asserted that “national character” was the “only fountain, only criterion, and only basis” of legislation. When turning to the national character, he sought to refute the stigmatic stereotypes of Romanians in terms of barbarism. He stressed that the majority of negative stereotypes originated outside and were subsequently taken up by Romanian boyars to legitimize their oppressive measures against the common people. Hașdeu set himself the task of unearthing new sources where the true national character could be found.²³ He asserted that the study of national character had to be based on the study of the past, and that this also exposed the need for a new and more coherent consciousness of the past as contrasted to the chaos of unrelated episodes.²⁴

With his new narrative of national character, Hașdeu sought to prove that the danger of demagoguery did not exist in Romania and thus the democratic reforms were possible—what is more, these reforms were “the necessary emanations” of the Romanian national character. The normative model here is an autochthonous democratic popular tradition vs. ‘alien’ feudalism. Hașdeu referred to the peaceful secession of the Roman *plebs* to the Aventinus hill as an example. The frequent wars of Romanian history, often pitting Moldavia and Wallachia against each other, were not caused by the people either: the conflicts were never between the peasants but between princes and boyars (who were *per definitionem* “aliens”).

²¹ The best intellectual biography on him to date is Pecican, *B.P. Hașdeu istoric*.

²² Hașdeu, “Caracterul naționalității române ca baza legislațiunei sale,” in *Articole politice*, vol. 1, 156–68.

²³ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

The concept of national character and the paradigm of *Völkerpsychologie*

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a reconfiguration of the identity discourses in Europe, opening up new paradigms to “explain” the nation as an organic entity, such as Social Darwinism. In the Romanian case, this new political discourse was in many ways rooted in the *Junimist* challenge to liberal nationalism in the 1860–70s, but its proponents also stressed some new aspects, focusing on culture as the core of national existence.

The ideological transformation can be observed in the works of the historian and political theorist Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol (1847–1920), who can also be considered a link between the *Junimist* paradigm and the new ‘cultural nationalist’ discourse. In terms of methodology, he was one of the first Romanian champions of the *Völkerpsychologie* paradigm. Xenopol was also one of the first Romanian publicists to use “national culture” as a keyword, in the context of proposing a new discourse of “national specificity” as early as in his article from 1868, published in the leading *Junimist* journal, *Convorbiri literare*.²⁵ “Cultura națională,” bringing together history and psychology. In defining “national character,” Xenopol contrasted “original character” (*caracter original*) and “historical character” (*caracter istoric*), linking them conceptually to such basic positivist notions as medium and race. Criticizing Le Bon for materialist reductionism and Buckle for his theory of the impossibility of moral progress, Xenopol sought to dynamize and historicize the concept of character, separating it conceptually from race and stressing that the historical development of a nation was necessarily based on ethnic mixing (which was essential for him to buttress his theory of Daco-Romanian continuity). At the same time, he vehemently attacked cosmopolitanism as undermining the basis of progress, which is the nation itself.

For Xenopol, nation is not only a political community but a psychophysiological framework which is necessary for human existence, influenced by the climatic and other factors, being rooted in a given territory. He held that these climatic and geographical factors defined the national physiology, which was manifested in every objectivation of the national psyche, from the multiplicity of ‘national’ painting schools to the difference of onomatopoeic words in different languages. Xenopol, nevertheless, kept away from traditional “zonal” climatic determinism. Instead, he cited such patterns as the frequent oscillations of weather, which

²⁵ Xenopol, “Cultura națională,” in *Națiunea română*, 69–142.

he considered a factor of augmenting work intensity, or the variation of mountain and valley (a motif that came to play an important role in the Romanian “ethnic ontology” of the interwar period).

With the radicalization of nationalism and the intensified transfer of the ethno-cultural discourse of Romanian national movements beyond the state borders, Xenopol’s voice also became more radical. In his inaugural lecture of rectorship of the university of Iași from 1898, national character emerges as a keyword in the context of the “nationalization of sciences,” stressing that even natural sciences should be adopted to the nation. At the turn of the century, Xenopol repeatedly returned to the problem of race, referring to Buckle, Taine, Brunetière, and mainly Le Bon as his “interlocutors.” He reiterated his earlier claim that national character was the fusion of psychological and historical aspects,²⁶ putting, however, more emphasis than before on its organic transmittance. He also explicitly contrasted psychology as an unchanging factor and history as marked by permanent change, defining character as the interplay of the two, rooted in the repetition of experiences, thus turning history into psychology.²⁷

While the positivist references of *milieu* and *race* became instrumentalized by the ethno-culturalist trends of nationalism in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the period also witnessed a number of attempts at using the paradigm of *Völkerpsychologie* to systematize knowledge on the nation. A symptomatic example is the questionnaire about national psychology launched in 1900 by the flagship of the cultural nationalists, the journal *Nouă Revista Română*.²⁸

Opinions about the national psyche could be subsumed under two main headings—positive archaism and negative primitivism, which can be reduced to a romantic extolling and a stigmatic deploring of character-traits. Respondents accentuated such character-traits as quick decision-making, quick despair, lion-like power to fight, skepticism and fatalism, superficiality, immorality, bravery, wastefulness, lack of order, lack of aspirations, inconstancy, hospitality, tolerance, lack of national sentiment but according to others strong national feeling, lack of economic imitative, conservatism, “Byzantinism,” and even the somewhat dadaistic “papagalism” – contributed by the poet Alexandru Macedonski. The overall impression of the reader is that the inductive method chosen by the editors resulted in a

²⁶ See, for instance, his “Factorii statornici ai istoriei,” in *ibid.*, 1–21.

²⁷ Xenopol, “Psihologia și istoria,” in *ibid.*, 48–68.

²⁸ For the questionnaire see *Nouă Revista Română*, supplement, vol. 1, no. 12, 15 June 1900.

rather chaotic vision, mixing regional and social particularities, moral judgments and over-generalizing metaphors, which did not open up the possibility of re-organizing the national discourse.

One gets similar impressions when browsing the handful of academic texts from the turn of the century operating in the paradigm of *Völkerpsychologie*. The young teacher Grigore A. Tăbăcaru's *Characterul* from 1903 also displayed the ambiguities of the positivist episteme, oscillating between a collectivist and an individualist modality, as well as between a determinist and an "educational-perfectibilist" vision. Rooted in Herbartian pedagogy, Tabacaru devised his theory with reference to John Stuart Mill's understanding of ethology as the science of character, Taine's understanding of history moved by the character of peoples, and Théodule Ribot's writings on the inheritance of character traits.²⁹ He was fascinated by the use of scientific apparatus in studying character, opening up huge prospects of evolution based on scientific objectivity superseding the subjectivity of the previous generations of observers. Tăbăcaru claimed that nations had specific character-traits—manifested in their common way of thinking, feeling and wishing—rooted in external influences and environmental factors. In order to grasp these traits, he was establishing a link between spiritual and anatomical-physiological aspects, rejecting natural determinism (Taine and Conta) and subscribing to the Lamarckian theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. At the same time, he was unable to give a systematic analysis of national specificity in this framework, and listed a series of platitudes about the Romanian character.

Somewhat paradoxically, the most sophisticated application of *Völkerpsychologie* or *psychologie des peuples* was provided by the philosopher Dumitru Drăghicescu who turned these analytical categories into a negative register, trying to link the traumas of national history to the present deficiencies of national character. The relationship of history and collective identity in the ethno-psychology elaborated by Drăghicescu was based on the positivist scientific canon. When formulating the scope of ethnic psychology, Drăghicescu emphatically kept to methodological individualism and claimed that national conscience could only be studied through individuals. Climate, race and physical factors are static conditions, whereas history can be accounted for as a dynamic condition.³⁰ On the whole, character is a historical product: the events condition the psyche, and history, "our great chemist," creates the social psychological

²⁹ Tăbăcaru, *Characterul*.

³⁰ Drăghicescu, *Din psihologia poporului român*, 50.

traits of Romanians. According to Drăghicescu, those peoples which do not have history can only have a chaotic character.³¹

While Drăghicescu turned to the “psychology of peoples” to buttress his liberal agenda, the turn of the century in Romania witnessed the strengthening of the patterns of conservative characterology based on appeals to continuity (and implying the idealization of peasantry as the living canon of national character, as well as the ethno-centric interpretation of social history). One can follow the discursive radicalization in the works of the political theoretician Aurel C. Popovici.³² In methodological and theoretical sense, he was following not so much the *Völkerpsychologie* paradigm, but rather the organicist sociology of Gumplowicz and Spencer, as well as the racial theories of H. S. Chamberlain. Popovici sought to connect the individual and collective understandings of character, linking nationality to the character of the people and also stressing that harmonic character entails embodying the national essence and consequently lack of patriotism equals lack of character.³³

Popovici shared Chamberlain’s idea that civilizational decline was connected to ethnic mixing and the consequent loss of unitary character. Protecting the unitary national character implied protecting the specific customs of the people as well as preserving its ethnic purity. National character is thus linked to historical continuity, it is the regulative idea which guarantees the existence of a people as a nation. Popovici described this continuity in terms of an organic development, under the leadership of the aristocracy and a strong ruler, vested with sovereignty, i.e., a supreme forum of decision-making and power. He stressed that the holder of sovereignty is always a creative minority, in whom the two—individual and national—senses of the notion of character converge. In contrast, the locus of the national tradition is the peasantry. Far from challenging the rule of this elite, however, peasants have a natural sense of hierarchy—Popovici uses the ‘folkish’ notion of *rânduială* (order of things), which became central to the ethno-metaphysical discourse of the 1930s.

The characterological discourse is thus used by Popovici principally to legitimize his vision of hierarchical order. He linked this to a conventionalist

³¹ Ibid., 55.

³² On Popovici’s intellectual context, see Robert A. Kann, *Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918* (New York: Octagon Books), 179–207; more recently, Neumann, “Federalism and Nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Aurel C. Popovici’s Theory,” 864–98 and Turda, *The Idea of National Superiority in Central Europe, 1880–1918*, 142–58.

³³ Popovici, *Naționalism sau democrație*, 41.

vision of society. Laws should not be abstract but in line with the national character: there is no need for permanent legislation, which might alter this character, but a balanced adaptation of ancient traditions of administration—by patriotic boyars—to the order of the day. For Popovici “national characterology” also had a strong ethnic connotation. He contrasted the “patriarchal character” of the Romanians to the destructiveness of ethnic aliens who wanted to impose social revolution (ranging from the Phanariots through the partisans of the French revolutionary model to the Jews as “natural democrats,” the main contemporary “agents of dissolution”).

The most interesting representative of the *fin-de-siècle* tradition of organicist conservatism, developing a national philosophy and psychology on the basis of *Völkerpsychologie* and eventually getting into a complex dialogue with the anti-modernist discourses of nationhood in the 1930s is Constantin Rădulescu-Motru. As many of his contemporaries, he was directed towards the German academia by Maiorescu and his circle, receiving his doctoral degree with Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig. In his early writings, in addition to his obvious debt to the *Junimist* tradition, one can clearly distinguish the influence of his master Wundt as well as a number of then-fashionable scholars of the social sciences, such as Gumplowicz.³⁴ From the very beginning, he was trying to bring together the perspective of psychology with the analysis of society. His real breakthrough in political pamphleteering was his *Cultura română și politicianismul*,³⁵ which aimed at a sweeping criticism of the political infrastructure of his country in view of its insufficient adaptation to Western moral and institutional patterns.

The book was an attack on the Westernized elite for failing to provide a moral guidance and thus leading the national community to the dissolution of character. The keyword of the essay is “culture,” in line with the rhetoric of Iorga and the other neo-nationalists of the turn of the century. Without culture there is no history, i.e., culture confers coherence on the community both in time and in space. While Rădulescu-Motru criticized the insufficient and superficial modes of Westernization, he did not question the aim itself of adapting to Western culture. Analyzing the question of developing an authentic culture in the Wundtian terms of the duality of institutions and ethno-cultural predispositions, his normative model remains the Western nation-building process, marked by racial and socio-economic unity.

³⁴ On Gumplowicz see Turda, *The Idea of National Superiority*, 38–50.

³⁵ Rădulescu-Motru, *Cultura română și politicianismul* in *Scrieri politice*, 65–183.

Between Modernization and Ethnicization

The years immediately following the end of the First World War meant a turning point in the relationship of the evolutionary paradigm and the national identity discourse. A typical discursive strategy was the linking of national tradition to modernity. This was present in such 'transitional' types as the agrarian populist ideology, which built its ideology on a dynamic understanding of the rural world, focusing on the peasant as a central type of Romanian society but rejected the traditionalist cult of "national archaism." The *poporanist* ideologue, Garabet Ibrăileanu, sought to bring universal and national culture together in his discourse of national specificity.³⁶ Instead of promoting autarchy, he considered that the way of regeneration depended on the ability of absorbing foreign cultural and institutional achievements. Along these lines, he claimed that national specificity was not a backward-looking normative construction but a dynamic and future-oriented framework of identification, to be accomplished by the popular masses participating in the cultural process. In his most acclaimed work, he connected the toolkit of *Völkerpsychologie* to cultural history.³⁷ He depicted Wallachian character as mobile and superficial, while Moldavians had a more contemplative and restrained mentality, looking more critically at the phenomena of modern institution-building. In the early 1920s Ibrăileanu reiterated these ideas in a number of essays on Romanian national character in literature.³⁸ While he praised the Moldavian and Transylvanian contributions to Romanian national culture as opposed to the capital, Bucharest, in the framework of the recently created Greater Romania he was rejecting any sort of political regionalism and he repeatedly asserted that his cultural typology did not imply a hierarchy of regions.

At the end of the 1920s Ibrăileanu's intellectual heritage was taken up by Mihai Ralea, who eventually followed him also in the seat of the editor-in-chief of *Viața Românească*. National specificity remained a key concept in his writings but he tried to turn it into a more unambiguously modernist direction, also devising a new synthesis of literary and social studies.³⁹ While not hesitating to enter the discourse of characterology,

³⁶ See the programmatic article from *Viața românească*, Ibrăileanu, "Cătră cetitori," in *Opere*, vol. 4, 3–5.

³⁷ Ibrăileanu, *Spiritul critic în cultura românească*.

³⁸ See, for instance, Ibrăileanu, "Caracterul specific național în literatura română" in *Studii literare*, 35–56.

³⁹ Mihail Ralea's studies on national specificity appeared in the volume entitled *Fenomenul românesc*.

Ralea made his position clear: he considered nation as a product of modernity, being “invented” by the French Revolution.

Ralea rejected the existence of a canon of expressing the national soul, stressing instead that the good artist was by default national so that specific character was rather descriptive/analytical than a normative category.⁴⁰ Propelled by the general thrust towards a normative characterological discourse, Ralea sought to separate the study of national specificity, which he considered legitimate, from the exaltation of national peculiarity, which he rejected. He defined national character as a set of shared values, cultural ideals, and a common style, and became more open to an essentialist definition of national culture. Nevertheless, he emphatically rejected the implication that one should consciously strive to incorporate “national motives” into one’s artistic creation. On the whole, he positioned himself on the middle-way, linking his vision of ‘unconscious’ national specificity to the ‘conscious’ identification with the popular cause, which was resonating with the *poporanist* agenda. Ralea opted for revalorizing exactly the undefined nature of Romanian character as a resource: the permanent geo-cultural in-betweenness led to a high level of adaptability, which is the sign of youth. The youthful and vivid features of Romanian culture yield a potential of Westernization: not having time to construct novelties, but being open to assimilate others’ good inventions. Ralea thus turned national characterology against traditionalism, describing the Romanians as quick in adapting, having a short memory, a permanent experience of uprooting, and devoid of any sense of a normative tradition – thus having a great potential of rapid modernization.

While politically on the opposite pole to the peasantist tradition, theoreticians of Romanian liberalism also offered complex narratives fusing modernity and national specificity. A highly idiosyncratic example of appropriating the characterological discourse for liberal purposes, is provided by the literary scholar, political publicist and amateur paleontologist Henric Sanielevici. Especially in his writings from the 1920s, this characterological discourse, which was at the periphery of his speculations at the turn of the century, came to assume a central position, signaling the transformation of the ideological context after 1918. In these writings he sought to fuse racial characterology with a bourgeois political agenda. In general, he accepted the criticism of the linguistic categorization of nations proposed by the racialist theories and separated race and language, even willing to concede that Jesus was Aryan. At the same time, rejecting

⁴⁰ Ralea, “Sociologie, socialism și caracter specific,” in *Fenomenul românesc*, 5–6.

the theories of H.S. Chamberlain and A.C. Cuza, he did not imply any biological hierarchy among these races and also extolled mixing as positive, pointing at classical Greek culture as a product of racial cross-breeding.

Analyzing the impact of geographical environment and the psychophysiology of race Sanielevici criticized Dobrogheanu-Gherea and Taine for over-stretching environmental determinism. Instead, following Fouillée and Wundt, he tried to establish a link between biology, paleontology, psychology, and aesthetics.⁴¹ Translating these (para-)theoretical considerations into the Romanian context, Sanielevici became entangled in the discussion about regional differences in national character. In contrast to the spiritualist and historicist arguments he sought to deduce character from differences in habitat and nutrition, which he interpreted in a Lamarckian key, i.e., presuming the inter-generational transmission of acquired characteristics. The Moldavians, whose characteristic life-style is pastoral, are characterized by softness, contemplativity and Nordic sentimentalism. In contrast, the Wallachians have a steppe mentality while the character of the Transylvanians is predominantly Alpine.⁴² With the tangible radicalization of the ethnic discourse and the blossoming of anti-Semitism around him, Sanielevici invested most of his energy into subverting the racial discourse of the extreme right. The outcome was the gradual racialization of his own discourse, which however did not imply a political concession, rather the attempt to reconquer the discursive space.

The key ideologist of neo-liberalism, Ștefan Zeletin, also formulated a characterological narrative, albeit in an inverted way. In his Gulliveresque pamphlet *Din țara măgarilor*, published in 1916, he described the cultural life of his country in terms of the conflict of “donkey-ness” and humanity. In his analysis, this cultural-civilizational in-betweenness led to the emergence of two mutually exclusive and equally self-deceiving ideologies. Zeletin’s chapter on the “Characterology of donkeys” was a parody of the contemporary theories of national character, but this grotesque description also featured some of the crucial elements of his mature analysis. First, in his ‘history’ of Donkey-land, the attempts of “modernization” (change of substance, i.e., turning into humans) came first, and the “nationalist” ideology was the counter-reaction. This obviously contradicts the conventional 19th-century picture, where the national community—and its ideo-

⁴¹ Sanielevici, “De la critica literară la biologie mamiferilor,” in *Cercetări critice și filozofice*, 279–312.

⁴² Sanielevici, “Moldoveni, munteni, ardeleni,” in *Probleme sociale și psihologice*, 33–64.

logical representation, i.e., nationalism—is something primordial, being radically challenged by the emergence of modernity.

Eugen Lovinescu, who is usually described as the most important Westernizer ideologist in the interwar period, also allowed for the existence of national character but tried to keep the aesthetic, ethical and ethnic spheres separate when analyzing literary works. His “History of modern Romanian civilization” started with a number of remarks pertaining to the tradition of national characterology, explicitly asserting that national character was a basic marker of culture.⁴³ His principal contribution to this tradition was organizing the characterological *topoi* into a binary framework of progressive/Westernizing and reactionary/orientalizing features. In methodological terms, the psychological/characterological aspects were crucial for Lovinescu to define his approach. Lovinescu used character, denoting the capacity of adapting to local conditions, as a conceptual basis of his argument against Marxism asserting the uniformity of social processes unfolding in different contexts. While he criticized Ibrăileanu’s regional typology, he also built his argument on the existence of temperamental differences, stressing the different mentalities of Moldavians and Wallachians, which he considered a principal cause of the divergent revolutionary movements in the nineteenth century.

The basic condition of Romanian culture, according to Lovinescu, was being wedged between two worlds (East and West), characterized by Latin mentality but kept outside of the main line of Western civilization due to the adversary historical conditions. He followed Drăghicescu in identifying the oriental influences in the popular psyche (vices, degeneration, corruption), blaming also Orthodoxism for cultivating exactly these oriental features. He also quoted Le Bon’s dictum that national history is the story of long efforts to fix the nation’s spirit, remarking that in the Romanian case this process was still in the making.⁴⁴

Going against the post-*Junimist* interpretation of history shared also by most of the *poporanists* and peasantists, he shifted the emphasis back from the Moldavian “critical tradition” to “liberal” Wallachia. As he pointed out, while Kogălniceanu and his reformist colleagues were related more to the past, the real revolutionary movement in Muntenia laid the basis of the future development. This contrast made it possible for him to

⁴³ Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, 8.

⁴⁴ Otherwise, Lovinescu followed Xenopol in criticizing Le Bon for confusing the normative and descriptive notions of character, stressing that it is principally the product of history and thus rather a descriptive-analytical category than a prescriptive one.

legitimize the *pașoptist* revolutionary project as something rooted in the local “racial psyche,” even though he was stressing that the program—for instance its republicanism—itself was at first indeed imitative of contemporary Western radicalism. While this revolutionary elite was not bourgeois economically, it was exactly the open character of the Wallachians that made them extremely receptive of the progressive ideas coming from outside. Furthermore, their special mentality (he talks about racial temperament—“temperamentul rasei”) provided a medium of reception for these ideas coming from outside, forming them according to its proclivities.

The Interwar Debate on National Specificity

On the other side of the ideological spectrum, the interwar period witnessed the boom of a new discourse was an *ahistorical* or *suprahistorical* normative vision: a “stylistic matrix” that ultimately constitutes the community. This natural structure that creates destiny, and in its turn, destiny compresses past, present and future into a supra-historical projection. The ontologization of the nation also meant that the concept of character, linked more to the romantic and positivist *epsiteme*, was gradually replaced by more abstract formulations, such as national specificity or national being.

A key figure of this turn, Lucian Blaga, formulated a radically autochthonist philosophical project, although he never identified himself completely with the claims of integral nationalism. In the 1920s, seeking to bring together epistemology and history was forming his own version of *Geistesgeschichte*, drawing mainly on the writings of the Viennese art historian, Alois Riegl.⁴⁵ These speculations had universal implication, although the metahistorical scheme of stylistic/epistemological change could be applied to the evolution of Romanian aesthetic doctrines. Anchoring epistemological styles in the spirituality of the national community was a logical step in the context of the debate on national specificity determining the cultural scene in the 1920s.⁴⁶ Consequently, Blaga related the notion of character to emotivity and temporality and selectively appropriated a number of references to the classic—mainly German—literature on national characterology into his philosophical speculations. In general lines, he accepted the connection of personality and race—

⁴⁵ See Blaga, *Filozofia stilului*, 1924.

⁴⁶ See Blaga, *Fenomenul originar*.

stressing that personality is condensed race—but rejecting the scientific definition of races. He also made efforts to incorporate cultural morphology into his philosophical profile. The crucial elements of Blaga's morphological conception are the supra-personally encoded *spatial matrix* ("spațiul mioritic") as the ultimate given of human identity, and the total negation of history as a constitutive factor of Romanianness.

In his famous speech of reception at the Romanian Academy, *Elogiul satului românesc* from 1937, Blaga identifies the "constellation" of Romanian culture with the natural framework of village-life („mythology and metaphysics make up the natural and self-evident framework of the village”), linking it with the transcendent-mythological perspective of the child.⁴⁷ This life-world is self-centered, and negates change (the entrance into history destroys this self-centeredness and throws the village into a “heterogenous and stretched time”). As he pointed out, the Romanian village did not let itself be tempted and attracted to history made by others “over our head.”

As we know, Blaga, following Frobenius, grasped this stylistic matrix in terms of an inbuilt spatial code forming the ultimate given of a national culture. The undulation of space derived from the ontological perception of reality found in Romanian popular poetry, that sets the circular movement between canon and community in motion, a process which might have become quite familiar to us by now. We go back to the popular culture to establish its matrix, and then this matrix is used for the reconstruction of the community itself. The continuity of the two cultures is of vital importance—a major culture cannot and must not be a fully historical culture: prehistory has to have its place, a harmonious culture must be built on the balance of “spirit” and “life”.

On the whole, Blaga's construction of national specificity had rather ambiguous features. In a way he was against the normative image of national specificity imposed from above and glorified free creativity, at the same time, on a deeper level, he still eulogized national features as the root of culture. But he never accepted the political ‘translation’ of his concepts along some sort of integral nationalism undermining the role of creative individuality.

The most ambitious attempt to reconsider the traditional canon of nationalism was the work of Nae Ionescu, professor of logic, editor, political oracle, and guru of the “young generation.” The central element of Ionescu's nationalist doctrine turned out to be an ontological statement:

⁴⁷ Blaga, “Elogiul satului românesc” (1937), in *Isvoade*, 7–24.

“one can be Romanian only if he participates effectively in Romanianness (participă în chip efectiv la ‘românia’),” “if, in other words, he realizes concretely, in his individuality, the organic spiritual structure, the essential depository of which is our nation.”⁴⁸ This formulation is obviously the most promising playground for the reciprocal legitimation of the normative *ontological canon* and the romantic individual, grasped in its capacity of expression, of realization—activating the reciprocal potentialities of manifestation.

If our destiny is internal, the old debate about the import of Western institutional forms is of secondary importance—something external, like an imported institution does not concern the people: “it is a fundamental fact that the interplay between cultures is only a matter of appearance, and a culture does not borrow anything from another of ‘a higher level’ but names for its own realities.”⁴⁹ Of course, with the deconstruction of the traditional dichotomy of *import* and *autochthony*, this new conception of (ahistorical) organic-ontologic autarchy did not become more tolerant with the alien, just the sphere of otherness shifted from the external to the internal: “The forms of spiritual life, conditioned historically, are not transmitted, but are being born.”⁵⁰ Thus the criterion of alienness becomes “internal destructivity”: the alien is the “outsider within,” who hinders the authentic spiritual culture in its imminent birth. The more he insists on being Romanian the more dangerous he becomes in his destructive potentiality of hindering or misleading the self-discovery of Romanianness.

The most important intellectual heritage of Ionescu was turning the problem of national specificity into an object of philosophical investigation. Although it was not him who first posed the question of “national philosophy,” Ionescu had a key role in turning this debate into a central discussion of the period. One of the first texts in this vein, was published by Ionescu back in 1921. Characteristic of his style of argument, Ionescu stated that “Romanian philosophy” as such did not exist. Giving up universalism was the first and fundamental step towards entering a new cultural epoch and becoming truly creative as a nation.⁵¹

Coining a coherent narrative of national philosophical thought from the seeming disparity of paradigms remained a central preoccupation of authors turning to the question of national philosophy in the 1920s. From

⁴⁸ Ionescu, “Noi și catolicismul” (1930), in *Roza vânturilor*, 200.

⁴⁹ Ionescu, “‘Internațională’ sub glugă” (1930), in *Roza vânturilor*, 217.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁵¹ Ionescu, “Filozofia românească,” in *Neliniștea metafizică*, 103–5.

this perspective “national characterology” became a political meta-science serving as an *organon* of establishing the congruence of political ideology and popular mentality. In his book, *Vocația* (1932), Rădulescu-Motru also sought to create a philosophical basis for his political agenda, stressing that “typology” and “characterology” were new scientific approaches being part of the “science of vocation.”⁵² The philosophical discourse of *Vocația* can be read as an attempt to salvage the framework of *Völkerspsychologie* in the new context. This is indicated also by his stress on environmental determinism, although he was admitting that some aspects of social behavior might well be inherited. This also provided arguments against the Blaga’s idea that the matrix of spatiality was a constant feature of the national soul. Rădulescu-Motru’s counter-argument was that the change of medium modifies the framework of adaptation and thus changes the very character of the population.

Issues of national specificity became crucial also to the journal *Gândirea* in the late-1920s as the journal became the forum of a debate on “national thinking,” originally initiated by Rădulescu-Motru but soon becoming a veritable avalanche of different trends and discourses. In the ensuing debate various contributors to *Gândirea* sought to bring together irrationalism, spiritualism and a search for the authentic national tradition. For instance, Radu Dragnea reiterated his regional characterology contrasting Moldavia and Bessarabia as a source of traditionalism as opposed to Transylvanian Latinism.⁵³

One of the most important reactions was coming from the young philosopher Vasile Băncilă (1897–1979), who—in his “Autohtonizarea filozofiei”⁵⁴—sought to delineate the main lines of a spiritualist-traditionalist philosophical system specific of the Romanians. Băncilă stressed that the rupture of forms and substances characteristic of Romanian modern tradition was a general European problem, at the same time the solution to this dilemma was different in different societies. He was arguing for the need of a new national philosophy, which would turn back to the national spirit (“fondul românesc inițial”), as much as literature and history already became nationally creative in the works of Hasdeu, Iorga and Pârvan.

Băncilă hailed Rădulescu-Motru’s *Personalism energetic* as the first step in creating a self-standing national philosophy. Nevertheless, he rejected *Völkerspsychologie* as a basis of such a national meta-science argu-

⁵² Rădulescu-Motru, *Vocația, factor hotărâtor în cultura popoarelor*.

⁵³ Dragnea, “Spiritul românesc creator,” *Gândirea*, no. 5 (Mai. 1927), 161–9.

⁵⁴ Băncilă, “Autohtonizarea filozofiei,” *Gândirea*, no. 5 (1927): 273–80.

ing that popular psychology, which was also unable to establish a unitary national character type, was an insufficient tool to establish a national doctrine and the new meta-science had to be epistemologically rooted. National character as such was not a natural given and it could be grasped only if it is formed by reflection. Without reflection any popular psychology remained contradictory, and only philosophy could create coherence among the seemingly contradictory features. He stressed that the basic categories of his envisioned autochthonous philosophy were living (“*trăire*”) and reflection (“*reflexiune*”).

At the turn of the 1930s, while allowing for the presence of certain national factors in philosophical investigation, the protagonists of professional philosophy usually took a reserved stance towards the idea of autochthonization which threatened their claim to universally valid knowledge. For instance, in a lecture held at the Sorbonne, the renowned professor of philosophy, Ioan Petrovici, also a former student of Wilhelm Wundt, attacked the inflexible constructions of national spirituality, stressing that positive sciences were not influenced by national character and thus scientific truth was beyond the national spirit.⁵⁵ Another prominent philosopher of the interwar period, Nicolae Bagdasar, entered the debate asserting the national character of thinking, but also the common frameworks of European ideas (science, moral, aesthetics, religion) transcending the national frameworks.⁵⁶ Similarly, the neo-*Junimist* P. P. Negulescu rejected the undertaking of national philosophy on the basis that neither pure races nor pure characters existed, and therefore using them as a starting point for creating a collective metaphysics was by default mistaken.

The intensification of the conflict between different ideological configurations seeking to grasp the national specificity led to a series of attempts to canonize national characterology as a scientific *organon* in the early 1940s. One of the most characteristic attempts was the book by the second-rate philosopher Ion Zamfirescu.⁵⁷ The author sought to provide an incorporative narrative of national philosophy, balancing between the different competing options and seeking to pacify the post-*Junimist* ideological tradition with the orthodoxist one. The envisioned new “national science” contained orthodoxism, traditionalism and nationalism as its main components.

⁵⁵ Petrovici, “La nationalité en philosophie” (1932), in Schifirneț, *Filozofie și națiune*, 130–42.

⁵⁶ Bagdasar, *Din problemele culturii europene*, especially the chapters titled “Cultura europeană” and “Criza culturii moderne,” 9–27 and 28–78 respectively.

⁵⁷ Zamfirescu, *Spiritualități românești*.

Zamfirescu stressed the agrarian nature of the Romanian life experience and also sought to derive a “popular metaphysics” from this experience. From this he extrapolated to a broader doctrine of traditionalism characterizing the Romanian mindset, mentioning Blaga, Băncilă, and Crainic as his main sources of inspiration. He focused on the peasant life-world marked by “ontologism,” and “anti-evolutionism,” the presence of myth, dogmatic thinking, divinity and mystery. Nevertheless, his praise was not unequivocal: while he hailed Crainic for bringing together the ethnic and religious registers, he also accepted Motru’s critique that Orthodoxy is supra-historical while Romanianism is historical.

The competition for the reconquest of the symbolic terrain from the radical nationalists also prompted Rădulescu-Motru to move towards the canonization of the national doctrine, although not so long before he still stressed that there was no way to devise an invariable national creed. *Românismul. Catehismul unei noi spiritualități* thus represented a break in many ways with Motru’s previous writings. The central aim of the text, however, is to provide a normative vision of Romanian “character” in line with the projected “destiny” of the nation: “People with the most powerful character are the best armed for the future.”⁵⁸ He stressed the need for a catechism, which would contain guiding principles in the development of individual and collective character. “Romanism” is thus a new world-view that can be “mechanically reproduced” and disseminated: the individual is only the product of the society so only a collective ideology can format the collective national body. This implied the fusion of some totalitarian elements with the traditional conservative-organicist national characterology. The new bio-political understanding of the nation also necessitates new sciences such as “anthropometrics,” “racial biology,” “characterology,” or “psychotechnics.”⁵⁹

A similar drive towards creating a normative image of Romanianness going beyond the actual ideological debates motivated the psychologist and philosopher and a close collaborator of Rădulescu-Motru, Ion F. Buricescu, to devise an ethno-psychological narrative of Romanianness.⁶⁰ He also tried to establish a list of canonic local and foreign works describing Romanian character to serve as an empirical basis of his speculations.

He subscribed to the idea of natural determinism, stressing that the main character traits of Romanians, such as “incompleteness,” passivity,

⁵⁸ Rădulescu-Motru, “Românismul. Catehismul unei noi spiritualități” in *Scriseri politice*, 444.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 495.

⁶⁰ Buricescu, *Sufletul românesc*

lack of coherent development, provisoric nature of arrangements, and their thirst for freedom were all derived from the interplay of climate and history. This also implied that by turning back to the original agenda of *Völkerpsychologie*, Buricescu sought to separate national characterology from biological racism and eventually rejected racial research as a basis for understanding the Romanian soul suggesting rather a spiritualist direction. The basis of Romanian character was the experience of insecurity, the permanent fight for survival, the ideal of national unity, love of nature, and the racial mixture of the population.

While institutionally some of these “moderate” authors managed to carve out a relatively influential position for themselves (for instance, competing with Noica and Eliade, it was Ion Zamfirescu who obtained the position at the University of Bucharest), their attempts of reconquering the discursive space for a historicist narrative of identity were unsuccessful—on the long run they were superseded by a spectacular cohort of thinkers, usually referred to as the “young generation,” who were reshaping the philosophical as well as the national discourse by offering a radically new mixture of modernist aestheticism and anti-modernist collectivism, decadentism and orthodox spiritualism, asceticism and orgiastic ritualism, anti-politics and totalitarian commitment.

The National Ontology of the Young Generation

Members of the “young generation” grew up with the experience of the collapse of the historicist discourse and were tempted by ideological offers negating the linear direction, or even the very meaning of history. Most of the crucial common themes of this group can be traced back to the programmatic formulations of Nae Ionescu. Many of them shared the conviction that ontology defines destiny; that history is somehow not internal, but external to Romanianness (grasped in terms of the matrix of popular culture). They also shared the preoccupation with the jump from minor to major cultural constellation characterizing Blaga’s philosophy; last, but not least, many of them shared a quasi-eschatological expectation envisioning the Romanians as actors in the story of salvation.

One of the protagonists of the group, Mircea Vulcănescu linked the generational agenda to the quest for a truly original Romanian philosophy.⁶¹ In the 1930s and early 1940s Vulcănescu was increasingly drawn to

⁶¹ Vulcănescu, “Filozofia românească contemporană” (1930), in *Pentru o nouă spiritualitate filozofică*, vol. I, 216–37.

the idea of creating a national philosophy on the basis of the phenomenological reconstruction of the modalities of “national existence.” As he pointed out in one of his essays, reality was at the crossing point of metaphysics with history, and thus the task of the philosopher was to create the image of the Romanians of all times.⁶² From a phenomenological perspective the spiritual features of the nation are existing in a supra-historic sphere, as the historicity of the national character is not evolution, but cognition, or recognition – a kind of collective anamnesis, realizing the hidden potentials of the nation in temporal self-projection. While, contrary to many of his generational peers, Vulcănescu did not subscribe to a racist ideology, his ahistoric understanding of national character was linked to the discourse of ethnic purity and alienation. He asserted that while the peasantry was the repository of national specificity the cities were mostly foreign enclaves, from which he derived the program of ethnic protectionism.

Vulcănescu’s speculations on national prehistory, obviously responding to the boom of autochthonist philosophical creations and the infatuation of mythical thinking in the late-thirties also sought to restore continuity with the normative past on a supra-historical level. Analyzing the “Romanian ethos” with regard to the Dacian ancestors, he rejected the inductivist methods of *Völkerpsychologie* and suggested a more deductivist metaphysical interpretation, finding the “organizing principle” of the national existence in the past.⁶³ Linking this to the classical canon of folkloric material usually considered specifically Romanian (*hora*, *doina*, *haiduc*, *Miorița*) he extrapolated the dual character of Romanian spirituality – the “call of the soil” and the “call of the forest”. The envisioned national regeneration was based on the return to these roots of existence.

While these considerations were more or less in line with the general trend of the 1930–40s, Vulcănescu went well beyond this by turning to Romanian language as a basis of national ontology.⁶⁴ Analyzing the underlying metaphysical assumptions of the language, he sought to describe the “Romanian idea of being” as opposed to the understanding of substance in the Aristotelian tradition. Based on the idea of the close relationship of the being of an entity (*ins*) and the modalities of its existence, the philosopher argued that in the eyes of the Romanians different manifestations could be part of the same reality, thus the relationship of actuality

⁶² Vulcănescu, “Omul românesc,” in *Către ființă spiritului românesc*, vol. III, 116–29.

⁶³ Vulcănescu, “Ispita dacică,” in *ibid.*, 130–40.

⁶⁴ Vulcănescu, “Dimensiunea românească a existenței,” in *ibid.*, 163–97.

and potentiality lost its binary organization. Character was a cognitive concept—every nation had its own specific perspective which it tried to impose on the world and it was the task of the philosopher using the hermeneutic method to reconstruct this cognitive framework with regard to the origins of the national community. The specific Romanian perspective of the world was rooted in the sentiment of universal connection of entities and the dynamic plurality of modes of existence—not an existential rupture of positive reality and the unrealized potentials but a coexistence of these modalities.

The Romanian understanding of laws of nature and of society are also rooted in this dynamic and plastic perception of the world, not based on an external normative instance but fitting in organically to the “order of things” (*rândială*). Human actions are aimed at integration into this order, through ritual gestures, symbols, and acts of repetition. This makes Romanians open to compromise, live with easiness in the face of life, do not attribute absolute validity to facts and have no fear of death, which is not perceived as a final rupture but rather shifting from one modality of existence to another. Hence the conception of the historicity of human action in the sense of “now or never” is not Romanian.

On the whole Vulcănescu’s national ontology was based on the redescription of some of the characteristic *topoi* of *Völkerpsychologie* in the new ontological language, mixed with a novel discourse stressing the plasticity of being, and last but not least some elements stemming from the totalitarian vision of collective ritualism and the cult of death. Even though Vulcănescu’s theory aimed at legitimizing the Romanian existence as dynamic and open-ended, the ontologization eventually served as a tool for essentializing the auto-stereotypes and eliminate any critical modality on a metaphysical level.

Another key figure in the tradition of “national ontology” grappling with the relationship of ethnicism and universalism is the philosopher Constantin Noica. Due to his writings in the 1970-80s and his highly ambiguous intellectual role in both legitimizing and subverting the national communist project, his “national metaphysics” has been an object of thorough analyses after 1989.⁶⁵ While the early writings of Noica, were far from being a compact and hegemonic discourse, nevertheless, already in the early thirties Noica asserted that ethnic roots were a key to history but only if they became part of a process of self-reflection. He described Ro-

⁶⁵ Karnoouh, *L'invention du peuple*; Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*; Laignel-Lavastine, *Filozofie și naționalism*; Lavric, *Noica și mișcarea legionară*.

manians as a people without history in the sense of lacking exactly this self-knowledge.⁶⁶

His political texts from the mid-thirties were increasingly permeated by a radical nationalist language, evidently influenced by the thinkers of the German *Konservative Revolution*. Rather than following the foreign models, Noica's ambition was devising an autochthonous system of references supporting the agenda of national regeneration. This implied also moving away from the rational patterns of argumentation characterizing his thinking before, and it is not by chance that this is also the period when Nae Ionescu appears as a key reference in his writings. According to Noica, Romanians, a young nation, were characterized by the lack of traditions but existed in a state of "blessedness," having a unique spiritual mission.⁶⁷ He was also increasingly fascinated with the question of characterology, as it is attested by his review article on the Austrian psychologist Hubert Rohrer's *Kleine Einführung in die Charakterkunde*. He was evidently dissatisfied with the previous attempts of studying national specificity on the inductive basis of *Völkepsychologie* and searched for a metaphysical matrix of Romanianness. Seeking to formulate a philosophy of nationalism by offering a new understanding of national characterology,⁶⁸ he evoked Blaga's ideas about the hidden mystic essence of the community and tried to bring together these metaphysical claims with the empirical evidence on the Romanian national mentality provided by the monographist school of Gusti.⁶⁹ His most radical attempt to develop a national ontology, following Vulcănescu, was based on the contrast of "to be" (a fi) with "to do" (a face) (which went back to Wundt's opposition of "Sein und Tun"), praising "to be" as the more authentic modality.⁷⁰ Characteristic of the ambiguities of these identity projects, while he did not share the presumption about the biological basis of national specificity he also rejected the *topoi* of conventional characterology (tolerance, patience, intelligence). Fusing characterology with a secularized eschatology, he projected the fulfillment of national specificity into the future, stating that the "Eternal Romania is the one which did not begin yet."⁷¹

⁶⁶ Noica, "Specifica noastră seninătate," in *Semnele Minervei*, 465–7.

⁶⁷ Noica, "Despre o Românie binecuvântată," in *Echilibrul spiritual*, 85–8.

⁶⁸ Noica, "Filozofia naționalismului," in *Echilibrul spiritual*, 138–43.

⁶⁹ Noica, "O filozofie a sufletului românesc," in *Moartea omului de mâine*, 288–91.

⁷⁰ Noica, "Veac al omului viu," in *Echilibrul spiritual*, 236–9.

⁷¹ Noica, "România de totdeauna," in *ibid.*, 251–3.

During the war years, having the opportunity of visiting Germany, he became increasingly familiar with the developments of the contemporary German philosophical culture. It is not by chance that his most focused work on Romanian specificity was originally meant for the German audience.⁷² Noica's book provides a representative collection of the *topoi* of self-description that circulated among the members of the "young generation" and the broader neo-nationalist circles in the late thirties. He talked of Romanians as being rooted in a Geto-Dacian civilization, providing an "alternative antiquity" to the Greco-Roman one, focused on village life. However, for Noica the village is only the raw material of a national culture, which needs formatting by a creative elite. Calling for a spiritual and material regeneration and dynamization of the nation in the era of *totale Mobilmachung*, he asserted that Romanians could not live any longer in a "patriarchal, village-like, ahistoric" country.

A similar preoccupation with the Münchhausenian jump "from within towards the outside" triggered Emil Cioran's plea for the "creation of history" through sacred frenzy and apocalyptic prophetism. The existential revolt gradually turned into a plea for a nationalist regeneration, unfolding through the apocalyptic fight against the "dictature of the rheumatic," and craving for a St. Bartholomew's Night to get rid of the corrupted older generations.⁷³ Cioran's most important political-philosophical pamphlet was the *Schimbarea la față a României*, a passionate plea for total mobilisation of the Romanian soul. Its argument is anchored in a framework of cultural morphology, focusing on the historical chance of "small cultures"—that can only become valuable "if they defeat their own laws of existence, breaking loose of their condemnation which forced them into the strait jacket of anonymity."⁷⁴ The key modalities of a culture reaching this level of individuality are Messianism, imperialism and paganism, and while searching for their potential *loci* in the Romanian self, Cioran's book ultimately transgresses the borders of a descriptive morphology to constitute the basis of a normative political eschatology.

In the book Cioran set to write an apophatic national characterology, trying to reach the essence of Romanianness through negation. There are no normative "continuities, restarts, lines and directives," instead Cioran preaches the Adamism of the Romanian characterology—the present experiences shape the new world of values: "every gesture, every action,

⁷² Noica, *Pagini despre sufletul românesc*.

⁷³ Cioran, "Crima bătrânilor," in *Revelațiile durerii*, 170.

⁷⁴ Cioran, *Schimbarea la față a României*, 12.

every attitude is an absolute beginning, there are no continuations, resurrections, lines and directives.”⁷⁵ This unprecedentedness means a pressing responsibility—but it also opens up unprecedented possibilities for the young generation: through this demiurgic position of inventing our collective self, “each of us can be the God of our history”—“our line is the destiny of the country.”⁷⁶

Breaking with any kind of normative image of national character available in the interwar cultural context, Cioran accentuates the argument with a claim that the very essence of cultivating a certain “*specificul național*” is a hindrance to the prophetic project, as it tolerates, or even prescribes, “the reactionary constants of our sub-historical existence.”⁷⁷ All the traditional nationalist discourses, rooted in conservatism, were just nourishing an essentially defensive attitude, not being able to understand the historical paradox of small cultures, that their national project necessitates a historical jump, the abandonment of any prescriptive tradition and the total breach of continuity. Cioran also negates the regenerative potentials of the other crucial focus of national characterology in Romania, the “authentic” *village*. It is the biologic basis of suspending history, and it cannot be the bearer and engine of a nation. Only the city and industrialization can serve as such a basis, as the city is a *par excellence* historical space. In Cioran’s interpretation national salvation does not entail the return to the roots. “By keeping to its primary characteristics, Romania cannot become a reality.”⁷⁸ His judgment is very sharp: “Returning to the sources it will become once again zero.”⁷⁹ Cioran thus rejects the idea of returning to the authentic self, instead, he believes in the assertion of the self through passionate negation.

As opposed to Cioran’s radical negation of the mainstream nationalist discourse, the ideological offer formulated by Mircea Eliade was more incorporative. He attempted the revitalization of the tradition in a projective-legitimizing way, i.e., reconstructing his position with reference to certain figures of the nationalist canon, thus making it compatible with the institutionalized discourse of nationalism, and using these authorities for rephrasing the canon at the same time.⁸⁰ Eliade’s self-professed intellec-

⁷⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 49.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 242.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Secondary literature on Eliade’s intellectual and political itinerary is immense, containing highly divergent approaches and judgments. For the most characteristic approaches see

tual program in the thirties was to bring together ethnic specificity and universal significance. It is along these lines that he criticized *Sămănătorism* as excessively self-centered, praising instead Blaga for going beyond the folkloric form in his aesthetic program while retaining a spiritual link to the archaic-rural sphere.⁸¹ Gradually, however, Eliade became more and more passionate about the theme of linking the ahistoricity of Romanian ethnicity to the vision of a supra-historical mission. By 1935–36 the motive of jump into/beyond history becomes obsessive. At the same time, in another paradigmatic text, he talked about the Romanians's thirst for eternity, stressing that only the presence of eternity can overcome corrupted politics.⁸²

Similar to Vulcănescu and Noica, Eliade also sought to ontologize the national allegiance—stressing that the real axis of national existence was not “to create” but “to be.”⁸³ This “being” was however not a static position but a link between the particular and the universal, the moment and eternity. In the context of modern societies in general and the Romanian society in particular, Eliade considered the return to the state of universal harmony only possible by a collective sacrifice, relaunching the latent “forces of creation.” He described the Romanian tradition particularly prone to accomplish such a spiritual leap “backward”—this way he could confer universal significance on the cultivation of national tradition.

When the legionary experiment was defeated by the authoritarian Antonescu regime, Eliade had to reshape his allegiances. As suggested by Sorin Alexandrescu,⁸⁴ in Portugal Eliade was slowly but gradually moving away from identifying himself with the Iron Guard, also for prudential reasons (being a state servant of the Antonescu government) and also because he perceived the legionary uprising as a failure. His concise history of Romanians written for the Portuguese audience thus documents his discursive negotiation with the “official nationalist” narrative anchoring identity in national history.⁸⁵

Ricketts, *The Romanian roots, 1907–1945*; Culianu, *Mircea Eliade*; Laignel-Lavastine, *Cioran, Eliade, Ionesco*; Călinescu, *Despre Ioan P. Culianu*; Țurcanu, *Le prisonnier de l'histoire*; Alexandrescu, *Dinspre Portugalia*.

⁸¹ Eliade, “Creație etnică și gândire politică” (1933), in *Textele “legionare” și despre “românism,”* 84–6.

⁸² Eliade, “România în eternitate” (1935), in *ibid.*, 138–40.

⁸³ Eliade, “A nu mai fi român,” in *ibid.*, 89–92.

⁸⁴ Alexandrescu, *Dinspre Portugalia*.

⁸⁵ Eliade, “Românii, latinii Orientului,” in *Jurnalul portughez și alte scrieri*, vol. 2.

While he integrated the main elements of the mainstream historical narrative, he retained a phenomenological position relegating *histoire evenementielle* to the background in contrast to a deductive scheme linking past, present and future. This made it possible for him to link the conventional historical narrative with a normative imagery of eternal Romanainness. Consequently, his imagery of Romanian national specificity was also a combination of the more conventional features and the national ontology of his generational peers. The main markers he identified are love of soil, Christianity, the importance of mountain and forest, the rural lifestyle and the “political genius.”

Summing up, the discourse of national specificity proposed by the “young generation” contained important points of departure from the mainstream nationalist discourse of the 1920s. First, they attempted to re-evaluate the character traits that were traditionally considered negative, stressing that they were in reality positive but this latent positive element needed to be “actualized.” Second, they operated with a dual discourse of jumping into history and reaching beyond historicity, asserting that only by a relationship to eternity a culture might become historical. Finally, they asserted that it is exactly by cultivating nationalism that a culture might become truly universal. Eventually, in the works of these extremely talented intellectuals, the deconstruction of the *topoi* of traditional characterology led towards a discourse of starting anew (this is what Cioran expressed with the metaphor of “Adamism”), developing a belief in creative force of violence. It is an irony of history that eventually most of the members of this generation, originally seeking to modernize and Europeanize Romanian culture, had to bear ample responsibility for the breakthrough of a highly destructive ideological configuration.

After 1945: National Characterology as a Zombie

In Romania, after 1945 the nationalist option was marginalized and key figures of the interwar period were either imprisoned or forced to emigration. The Romanian exile community in the 1940-50s lived in the conviction that the entire national tradition was destroyed by Communism and eventually the Romanian culture they had known in the interwar period as such only existed outside. Along these lines, members of the emigré community sought to rethink the Romanian identity discourse. In his essays published in the first decade after 1945, Eliade sought to create a common cultural-political narrative to facilitate the dialogue of the differ-

ent groups, under the aegis of the common mission of preserving the national culture.⁸⁶ In this context, he resumed the topic of the split of Westernizers and autochthonists and proposed a dynamic fusion, integrating both these Romanian cultural heritages with the European cultural trends.

From the early-1960s onwards, however, the incorporation of nationalist themes and cadres into the Communist framework created a place for a selective re-appropriation of the interwar canons.⁸⁷ This also implied the return of a number of thinkers who were previously persecuted for their nationalist past (such as P.P. P. Panaitescu, C. C. Giurescu, N. Crainic, and C. Noica). At the same time, literary historians could experiment with re-contextualizing the heritage of Lovinescu as a legitimizing strategy of modernism and non-ideological aestheticism. Others resumed the “*popo-ranist*” tradition, publishing the works of Ibrăileanu, while again others turned to Blaga’s writings as an alternative to Marxist philosophy. This meant that the question about “*specificul național*” became increasingly legitimate to pose and also that the interwar debates between the different political-aesthetic trends were restarted.

The most important figure mediating between the interwar intellectual culture and that of Communist Romania is doubtlessly Constantin Noica. Constructing the linguistic matrix of Romanianness in order to localize some peculiar modalities mirroring the peculiar Romanian “sense of existence,” Noica identified the preposition “întru”⁸⁸ as an indicator of the Romanian spirit’s specific tuning towards existence. The spatial location of Romanianness is equally ontological: Romanians were destined to mediate between East and West in terms of geopolitics and also cultural influences. While in purely material terms Romanians might have been backward compared to the West, they had a considerable advantage on the ontological level as their relationship to the Being was much more complex and open-ended than the occidental understanding.

In the late-1970s, the Romanian communist leadership, suffering from the permanent crisis of legitimacy, turned to radical nationalism in order to supplement the increasingly impractical universalist class-narrative. A dominant trend in the late-1970s and early-1980s indicating the nationalist ideological turn was protochronism, framing the issue of national specific-

⁸⁶ Eliade, “Probleme de cultura românească,” in *Împotriva deznădejdiei*, 73–9.

⁸⁷ On the origins of Romanian “national communism,” see Tănase, *Elite și societatej*; Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons*.

⁸⁸ For an interpretation of Noica’s national ontology, and an innovative analysis of “întru,” see Karnoouh, *L’invention du peuple*.

ity in terms of historical precedence.⁸⁹ A vulgarized version of this “national ontology,” became increasingly dominant, to be both continued and over-coded by the neo-orthodoxist discourse after 1989. The most important mediator in this sense is doubtlessly Dumitru Stăniloae, who had made a huge contribution to the development of Romanian theological thought after 1945. While he could not engage in direct politics, the meta-political implications of his texts were closely linked to his ideas developed in the late thirties.⁹⁰ Stăniloae engaged in a protochronist interpretation of Romanian culture as a model of Western civilization rather than its marginal “pupil.” He asserted that Maramureș wooden churches were the precursors of Gothic style and in general Romanian folk culture provided an exceptionally rich cultural background. From this he drew the conclusion that Romanian culture was a perfect synthesis of all positive traits of humankind. This discourse was coupled with a strong anti-Western pathos—describing occidental mysticism as the “mysticism of darkness.” In this sense, while political Orthodoxism was clearly not compatible with the ideological toolkit of national Communism, Stăniloae’s national integristism and anti-Western autochthonism was resonating with the official ideology and created a possibility of relatively swift transfer of ideological allegiances after 1989 from national communism to spiritualist nationalism.

In contrast, in the 1990s a number of works were written which sought to subvert this characterological tradition and promote a new Westernist discourse of identity.⁹¹ It is indicative of the power of the interwar discursive heritage that some of these authors, most importantly Horia-Roman Patapievici gradually also reverted to a more ambiguous position edging on anti-modernism. Thus, it can be said that while the more inductive *Völkerpsychologie*-based characterological approaches can hardly break out of their marginal position, cultivated mostly by amateur scholarship, the *topoi* developed during the “metaphysical turn” of the national discourse in the 1930s retained a certain grasp on the Romanian cultural elite and it is likely that in time of the crises of political institutions and collective identity they will continue to pop up in public discourse.

⁸⁹ On Romanian protochronism see Verdery’s analysis from *National Ideology under Socialism*, chapter 2, and Tomiță’s recent monograph, *O istorie “glorioasă.”*

⁹⁰ See for instance Stăniloae, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român.*

⁹¹ Patapievici, *Cerul văzut prin lentilă*, and Barbu, *Firea românilor.*

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***Neam* (Romanian for *Kin*) and *Popor* (Romanian for *People*): The Notions of Romanian Ethno-Centrism**

Victor Neumann

Variations of European Cultural and Political Geography

The decades that have elapsed since the end of World War II show that Western Europe is interested in redefining some of its concepts that lay at the basis of its nineteenth- and twentieth-century politics. This priority of interests can be noticed both at the level of academic endeavors and state politics. The tendency is to promote languages that develop plural perspectives—including the whole array of legal notions they subsume—without claiming that these have managed to completely go beyond all the tones of discomfort contained in previous identitarian ideologies. In this equation, Eastern Europe is confronted with more delicate issues: among these, the need to assume the past from the perspective of two totalitarian systems represents one of the greatest difficulties to be tackled in the process of this region's social and political democratization. Recently freed from communist regimes, some of the societies from this region are confronted with prejudices resulting from the return to nationalist discourse. The reconfiguration of the idea of national identity in keeping with the aspirations of European integration is only at the beginning and is rather unfamiliar to the wide public.

If in the West politics is interested in the promotion and conservation of social equilibrium by a competent management of the state, Eastern European politics is attracted by the idea of regaining the trust of the masses in point of the ethno-cultural and linguistic attributes of collectivities. If Western cultures underscore the need to decode the key-terms defining identity in its historical evolution and highlighting temporal shifts and socio-political ruptures, Central and East European cultures attempt to recuperate the past by constructing an anti-communist dis-

course. If the West engages with collective memory in view of an honest knowledge of the past, in some states from the East historiography recovers its own history by deciding to ignore its dark episodes.

There is one exception among the states of the European Union, and that is Greece: it keeps some of the particularities of the Balkan zone while its rhetoric about identitarian behavior oscillates between state bureaucracy and an ethno-semantics of race and blood. The latter aspect is directly linked to the Greek literalist historiography founded on the grounds of eighteenth-century German philology, a historiography that has been supported by the domestic authoritarian pedagogy of the last two centuries. Political interests were evident in its case; as a consequence, scholars pondered over Hellas's regeneration as it had been invented by German classic philologists, since this was to represent the touchstone determining the Europeanness of modern Greeks.¹ They did not consider, though, that long spans of time are invisible to human perception, with one exception: whenever we talk of iterative structures that an individual consciously assimilates, he or she ritualizes and enriches them from a cultural point of view.² Otherwise, as Reinhart Koselleck has noted, there are temporal breaks and temporal layers which indicate multiple levels of origin. From the above example it is clear that we have to identify the real temporal gaps or differences in institutional organization and forms of cultural expression that exist between Antic Greece and the neo-Greek world in order to avoid using excessive references and justifications in our interpretations. Unfortunately, present-day Greece knows "a centripede cultural movement, and historiography only knows one point of departure, that of fifth-century B.C. Athens."³

The above model of cultural-historical thought has been considered natural in the states of Central and Eastern Europe. Such has been the case of Romania, for instance. This issue deserves reconsideration and dissemination as an "indisputable" given of the representatives of the cultural and political elite. In an article titled "The Balkan Socrates and the Socratic Caragiale"—an article often invoked as an identitarian benchmark within the Romanian cultural press—Alexandru Paleologu claims that philosophy, architecture and Greek tragedy have been "indisputable grounds of European civilization and they are also obviously Balkan." He

¹ Herzfeld, "Vers une phénoménologie ethnographique de l'esprit grec," 39–53.

² Koselleck, "Einleitung," in *Zeitschichten. Studien zur Historik*, 12.

³ For the Greek case, see a recent analysis of the historiographical discourse in Herzfeld, "Vers une phénoménologie," 40, 53.

underlines this idea in several paragraphs from his text and does not only foreground the above-mentioned conceptual confusions, but also the need to preserve the old-fashioned formula of nineteenth-century literature and historiography. Paleologu notes, "I would think it strange to disregard the fact that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were Balkan. One might say Balkanism is a more recent concept. In fact it is not recent. It is either related to that geographic area and the world inhabiting it, or, if it is a local and ephemeral phenomenon, it could only be inherent to such a structure." The essayist concludes that there is "obviously an eternal core [of Balkanism], an essence that has known no caesura ever since Antiquity."⁴ Temporal overlaps or metaphors taken as reality (as they can be found in the above-mentioned article) stimulate those cultural-political theories from which we cannot understand the past or the present. Instead, what is at stake here is an approach via which intellectuals alongside a large part of the population compete with the state in producing stereotypes.

Despite the genesis of modern intelligentsia under the sign of the convergence of ideas, socio-political evolutions are different if we are to compare the Western world with the Eastern European one. The most concrete aspect is revealed by cultural and political concepts that contribute to the formation of collective identity. Truly, none of the European geographical areas lacks its own problems, and crises of consciousness have periodically manifested themselves from one end of the continent to the other. It is equally true that oftentimes sources are common and elites are tempted to embrace the same ideals. After a more thorough examination of facts, though, we almost always find more nuanced means for comprehending society and events. In other words, we become aware of the differences generated by the set of values acknowledged and professed by the inhabitants of modern Europe.

There have been many attempts trying to avoid the direct analysis of events with which the variations of the European cultural and political geography are confronted these days. Some researchers compare the thrusts for local and regional autonomy from Northern Italy with the Czechoslovak or Croat-Serbian cultural-state rupture, as if social and institutional structures in these regions were alike. The same intellectuals comparatively comment upon Catalan-Spanish bilingualism and Transylvanian *multiculturalism* from contemporary Romania, as if there was an identical relation to signs and symbols in the two corners of Europe.⁵ In-

⁴ Paleologu, "Balcanicul Socrate și socraticul Caragiale," 20–1.

⁵ See such comparisons in Niculescu, "'Nația' și limba," 3.

deed, the relation between culture and structure is a complex one, but it does not always urge towards employing the same perspective or judgment in point of various societies.⁶

My study pertains to the theory of history and focuses on Eastern Europe and particularly Romania. My intention is to explain that despite the intellectual convergences during the Enlightenment era—which I have discussed in other studies and books⁷—there are a series of particular elements that have made possible the existence of differences between Eastern and Western Europe. I refer here to the Romanian terms that define collective identity. I will particularly analyze the concept of *neam* (Romanian for *kin*) and its relation to the idea of national identity. The difficulty with which intellectuals and politicians are confronted when they focus on the formulation of common European languages—such as, for instance, the project of the European Constitution—derives from the contradictions that animate policies in Western and Eastern Europe. Terminology indicates the comprehension of the identity issue, and my investigation means to underscore from where parallel evolutions start and by what means they prove the persistence of distinct cultural foundations.

The main problem derives from the fact that the concept of *națiune* (*nation*, or *popor*, i.e., *people*) is acknowledged in Central and East-European political cultures as a concept that must pre-date the existence of the Constitution. More precisely, this concept must define a cultural and geographical cohesion in the absence of which no legal document can be discussed. As far as the East of Europe is concerned, one should examine the *ethno-nationalist* values that became active at the beginning of the nineteenth century—that is, at the same time with Romanticism—and

⁶ Linguists, ethnographers and anthropologists do not have the most adequate tools for recognizing these phenomena. It is for this reason that in their attempt to prove their attachment to a pluralist discourse they get entrapped within a purely speculative interpretation. At other times, they provide ideologists with metaphors that offend rational interpretation. History as a field of study seems to have better chances to intervene in the clarification of these things. I refer here to the situation in which we accept the independent field of study that was discovered as such by the Enlightenment people and which has the capacity to impose the organization of its representation. The *Aufklärer* Nikolaus Vogt said that it is possible “to contain ‘the heroic mania’ of princes” provided that history “manages to transform historians into philosophers.” What draws my attention here is the ambiguity of the concept, its oscillation between the idea of progress and that of fatality, namely that aspect which often generates the ideological function of history. According to Koselleck, this means of using the concept also contains the criteria that allow one to expose its ideological character. See Koselleck, *L’expérience de l’histoire*, 97.

⁷ Neumann, *Tentația lui homo europaeus*.

which have continued to survive and have become competitors to the idea of state and European constitutionalism. The result of the amalgamation of history with politics could be seen in the case of conflicts from former Yugoslavia—especially following the use and abuse of multiple cultural and religious legacies, which have often become incompatible with the aspirations of contemporary Europe. In this context, it has been noted that Western resolutions aiming to quiet down territorial and inter-communitarian disputes failed to base themselves on the need to accurately decode the ideological messages which unleashed the tragic events of the past and for which the theory of identity played an important role.

The differences between the two areas of the continent have increasingly become a theme of reflection that has drawn the attention of intellectual milieus from among the member states of the European Union. Richard Wagner considers that Eastern Europeans are currently facing a huge dilemma. They:

[...] do not trust the new West, under the leadership of Germany and France, yet at the same time they only see their future in the EU and NATO. The dilemma becomes even more obvious when we notice that the main reason of this decision shared by all social classes and by almost the entire political class is not necessarily the will for a substantial modernization and regulation of society as it is the quest for a shield to protect them against the instability still coming from the post-Soviet space.

The author further notes that for Eastern Europeans:

[...] the [American, n.n.] individualist project of fulfilling private happiness is closer and dearer than the Western European slogan favoring social security and implying a strict regulatory policy. This can be explained by Eastern European state traditions which prove to have a weak social consistency seasoned with a dose of anarchy.⁸

Although, unlike Wagner, I do not believe that the individualist project is a reality in the case of Eastern-European nations, I am positive that there is a huge difference between the US and the political entities from former European communist countries. This misunderstanding derives from the fact that the US has been constituted on the idea of citizens' identity and on a set of laws thought and formulated in correspondence with the very nature of that society, while the states of Central and Eastern Europe continue to focus upon the assertion and definition of their collec-

⁸ Wagner, "Osteuropa—Ein amerikanisches Bundestaat?," 19.

tive identity in virtue of the Romantic *Kulturnation*, rejecting state dispositions and ignoring the role of societal organization on competition-based criteria.

Notions generate languages, and the latter are the result of connections existing between society and politics. History intervenes in this area of knowledge. The social and political events of Eastern Europe should therefore be decoded in relation to the beginnings of modernity. We will see that they are often different in comparison to similar interests on the part of the West. I would venture to claim that when we analyze social behaviors—especially those from rural areas or from the outskirts of large cities—we should link them with the set of values cultivated by family, school and churches. The national myths from Serbian, Albanian, Romanian or Greek cultures mainly penetrated these countries by means of the above-mentioned institutions. The ways in which the liquidation of illiteracy occurred here and in which the idea of *the nation* (*națiune*) was formed suggest some specific features that have been foregrounded by philosophers around Karl Popper; these scholars have therefore paved the way for the necessary re-evaluation of political thought.

Linguists, historians, ethnographers and politicians have been the ones defining identity in Central and Eastern Europe. Jurists and clerks played a minor role in comparison to the previously mentioned categories. This also explains the tendency to overlap language and *ethnicity* or language and *nation* or *state*. The investigation of this way of collective identification is a priority for cultural and political theory. Starting with Germany, whose historical evolution we have understood in virtue of the set of values specific to the Central European society, and continuing with Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia or Greece (countries that have been strongly marked by the German cultural influence), promoting the theory of ethnicity therein sanctions these countries' attraction to imaginary constructions and their ignorance of the concrete facts of history, of ideas and factors that contributed to the birth of the modern European state. The renaissance of Germany after the end of World War II is proof that the country's abandonment of its servitude to the theory of identity has been essential. The rediscovery and valorization of domestic regional legacies and the American formative support (not only the economic one) have played an essential role in the mutations occurring at the cultural, social and political levels in the case of Germany.

Wherever language, ethnography, geography, onomastics and religion represent the main benchmarks for identifying national belonging, differentialism feels at home, as during the Romantic period when it made its

debut. In some cases the results for just one of the above-mentioned fields seem to be sufficient for putting up an identitarian label. Assuming a collective identity is attractive for many people but if this occurs in the absence of the individual's self-consciousness, identity means nothing. It can only be perceived as such thanks to a minimal training and, consequently, in light of social emancipation. The crisis that emerges following the transition from a medieval socio-political structure towards modernity produces texts that try to justify the ideological roles of collective identity.

Symbolical Figures and Romanian Conceptual Confusions

Beyond the actual content of texts, the fundamental problem which has remained valid in Romania is that of the addressee, that of the communication between addressor and addressee. In societies in which the middle class is made up of only a handful of people, the elites do not have a real dialogue partner. Consequently, they keep their conviction that transmitting feelings is enough and that they do not have to also transmit information and formative ideas. In fact, not everyone can control factual and linguistic factors, not even all intellectuals—hence derives the random arrangement of notions defining socio-communitarian aspirations. Instead of the invocation of social behaviors, we get a dangerous appetite for abstract descriptions. In the Romanian culture, for instance, the use of terms such as *neam* (kin), *etnie* (ethnicity) and *popor* (people) indicate a preference for symbolical figures and not for the idea of organizing human cohabitation. This explains why the concept of *națiune* (nation) acquired a meaning in which the social concrete—namely the individual—disappeared or was falsified. In this situation, it was enough to go only one step further in order to get to totalitarian experiments.

Written works became a constant intellectual interest for noble families in nineteenth-century Romania, and later, for bourgeois families. Representing a privileged category by their own origins, the intellectuals of the modern era worked to the limited benefit of the circle that had promoted them. They did not reflect on a social pedagogy in the sense of that promoted by Jules Michelet and his French co-generational peers. Instead, they were drawn to a messianic-type of history, one that had to uphold the first emancipation of the masses at the side of the Church. This kind of education could not produce the necessary sense of awareness and social equilibrium understood in a modern sense. The Romanian example is a most eloquent one in this respect.

Romanian social realities started to loom out after 1918. Consequently, the interest in introducing a program for the emancipation of Romanians from Transylvania, Banat, Bukovina, and Bessarabia was welcomed. Of particular interest was the experience of intellectuals from the Old Kingdom, in the context of which some of them became the administrators of Transylvania. They discovered the Romanian population's inferiority complex in comparison to Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians, which determined them to orient education in schools depending on this aspect. Though Romanian religious schools were rather numerous, economic and cultural inequalities seemed to have created an inferiority complex in comparison to the formative institutions of the German and Hungarian communities. Historians have recorded that Transylvania continued to witness disequilibrium even after the region had been taken over by a Romanian government. Thus, the report of a 1926 inspection in the district of Târnava Mică held that:

[...] there are two completely different worlds: on one side, there is light, on the other, there is darkness; on one side, there is wealth, on the other, poverty; one side knows disorganization, the other—discipline and order. How has it been possible that Transylvanian Saxons and Romanians have lived side by side for so many hundreds of years without the latter being positively influenced by the former?⁹

I agree that the inspector found a painful but true reality characterizing the district of Târnava Mică. He not only saw that things were better in the Saxon community, but also why they were better than in the Romanian case. Unfortunately both then and later intellectuals did not answer the inspector's question; they refused to consider the adequate solutions that could help overcome drawbacks generated by education. The absence of Romanian-Saxon encounters at the level of the rural population was another reality. We should be aware that the two worlds were based on different sets of values, as the inspector had rightly noted. Especially in the case of Transylvania this referred to the persistence of closed, medieval-like communities. The Romanian-Saxon co-habitation did not presuppose the defense of common values. On the other hand, the urbanization of the Romanian population was late in comparison to that of the Saxons; therefore, it was characterized by a weaker social mobility and cultural emancipation. The Romanian community was not only confronted with inherited historical drawbacks, but also with economic poverty and the absence of representative institutions, a weak social mobility and the delay of the

⁹ Livezeanu, *Cultură și naționalism în România Mare*, 179.

masses' cultural emancipation. The dysfunctionality of inter-communitarian relations should also be ascribed to those who managed the problems of Transylvanian inhabitants depending on the interests of one or another of the various cultural-linguistic groups.

When after 1918 it became possible to see the results of historical evolution, one also had to identify the means by which one could take Romanians, Saxons and Hungarians out of their isolation. Instead of a genuine liberal orientation, the elites from Bucharest and from regional centers once again focused on the conservative ideology and on the redrawing of inter-communitarian borders. Sorin Alexandrescu was right to note that:

Undoubtedly, a less centralized politics which was also more cooperative with local forces [...] could have at least leveled roughness. [...] It was necessary that education become unified and, in the new provinces lacking Romanian schools because of the former Russian and Hungarian administration, it was necessary to place emphasis on the compensatory support of Romanian-language learning. Yet, in light of the same political lack of vision, these cases too were characterized by postwar governments who never wondered if the unilateral favoring of Romanian learning, which would be useful in the short run, might not be counterproductive in the long run.¹⁰

While politicians became the champions of compulsory centralization, intellectuals once again failed to pay due attention to the important problems of the Romanian society. They did not see that the Romanian evolution in virtue of a collectivist paradigm would be completely insufficient for the country's confrontation with the world at large. They underestimated the role of the individual to the benefit of a collectivist philosophy and a dominant minority. Accustomed to ordain their orientations in keeping with their own interests or with a strictly ideological line of thought, the intellectuals of Greater Romania never thought their relation to the masses from an open non-discriminatory perspective. What held relevance for them was the historical myth concerning the need to deepen the idea of national identity as formulated in the nineteenth century. Adaptation to the new post-World War I political entity did not diminish the number of existent ideological excesses and did not contribute to overcoming social disequilibria inherited from the previous era. The centralism of the new administration minimized or wasted its chances to reach an economic standard based upon the resources of the new regions annexed by the Romanian state. Instead, they encouraged complexes of superiority or inferi-

¹⁰ Alexandrescu, *Paradoxul român*, 68–9.

ority, which, not least of all, happened because of the actions of politically-involved intellectuals.

At the side of some of his generational peers, Constantin Noica raised collectivism to the rank of a philosophical norm. The problems regarding the formation of the individual conscience were permanently delayed in Romanian cultural debates. Instead, important philosophers and historians—as well as many opinion-makers who followed in their footsteps—proposed the establishment of a centralized culture.¹¹ Nationalist symbolism was related to the antique and vigorous life of peasants, with *Volk* or *neam*. Yet, on becoming urban dwellers, peasants were not implicated in the definition of the new national culture. The concepts of *naționalitate* and *etnicitate* (*nationality* and *ethnicity*) reflected the primordial and unconscious rural way of life, for which reason they became of interest to nationalists.

Many historians have openly embraced the ethno-nationalist approach to state identities. Some of them have even held that the idea of an ethnic nation was a modern one.¹² Correlating this notion of ethnicity with language makes me believe that the analysis of cultural-political languages

¹¹ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 95.

¹² Hitchins, *România 1866–1947*, 21. His text reads as follows: “They (i.e., 1848 Romanian politicians) focused on asserting the statute of autonomous nation [...]. Inspired by the modern idea of the ethnic nation, they also aspired to the fulfillment of a Greater Romania that would also include the Romanians from the Habsburgic and Tsarist Empires [...]” “Like their brethren beyond the Carpathians, Transylvanian 1848 revolutionaries had lay intentions and bestowed their major faith in the ethnic nation.” The ethnicist political languages that some Romanians employed at the times did not consider a modern idea of identity, in the sense of that promoted by revolutionary France or by Michelet’s historical-political thought. In other words, no sign of equality existed in those days between the Parisian political language and that from Islaz, Bucharest, and Blaj. There were however cases when 1848 Romanian revolutionaries tried to propose truly revolutionary terms such as *populus* or *people* in the meanings they ascribed to a civic nation or nation state. The liberal penchant from the first stage of the revolution from Wallachia was abandoned in the following decade in favor of the ethnic idea of *națiune* (*nation*), one which was conservative and not modern. See this way of asking the identity question in Teodor, *Samuil Micu. Istoricul*. Teodor was one of the historians who influenced Hitchins during the latter’s studies in Cluj-Napoca, an influence which reveals a manner of understanding the idea of collective identity specific to the Ardeal region. For an explanation of the nuances attributed to the ethnic term by German and East-European Romantics, see Neumann, “Herderianismul: o prefigurare a teoriei et-naționaliste?”, 9–29. For an analysis of the languages of Romanian 1848 revolutionaries, see particularly Cornea, “Cuvântul ‘Popor’ în epoca pașoptistă: sinonimii, polisemii și conotații. Între semantica istorică și semiotica mentalului colectiv,” 208–43.

deserves special attention. The investigation of concepts defining collectivity once again becomes important for knowledge as well as for political practice. In this sense, for a long time, the discussion of identity-related questions by successive generations of historians, linguists, ethnographers and politicians was vitiated by the use and abuse of terminological meanings from the Romantic era and the era of the assertion of group consciousness, respectively.

The example of the Romanian concepts of *neam* (kin), *etnie* (ethnicity), *popor* (people), and *naționalitate* (nationality) proves a cultural penchant for the development of a restrictive understanding regarding the definition of one's own collectivity. This way of conceiving identity—multiplied by cultural, political and mass information means—used to be and still is one of the important factors that have given rise to the question of minorities ever since the nineteenth century. I refer here to the marginalization of linguistic-religious groups different from the mainstream Romanian-speaking or Christian Orthodox community. This implies the subjective interpretation of the concept of *națiune* (nation). To this day, language and religious affiliation have continued to play a fundamental role in such an interpretation, which initially promoted the idea of difference in relation to any kind of cultural-religious “Other,” only to later put forth a series of discriminations. The reasons invoked by one's predecessors in view of affirming ethno-differentialism do not justify the uncritical transmission of the ideal from one generation to another, even if we might welcome such ideas within the historical context in which *the nation* was formed.

The terms of *neam* (kinship), *etnie* (ethnicity), *popor* (people), and *naționalitate* (nationality) are related; they became a part of political ideology in those places where national consciousness appeared late—for instance, in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Romania, where the absence of a real state stimulated their very emergence.¹³ Andrei Cornea holds that only:

[...] nationalism used the capital notion of *popor* (*neam*, *das Volk*) (people, kin, Volk) in a non-literal sense which became totally anti-literal with the passage of time: from its [nationalist n.n.] perspective, *a people* is restricted to an *ethnicity*, which immediately implies the elimination of national minorities from its body.¹⁴

¹³ See also Balázs Trencsényi's study in this volume, “The Conceptualization of *National Character* in the Romanian Intellectual Tradition.”

¹⁴ Cornea, *Turnirul khazar*, 149.

This is exactly how things stand. They require further elaboration, though, especially since Romanian notions and particularly their connotations have not benefited from a comparative study in relation to notions employed in other languages, nor have they benefited from an analysis meant to reveal their ambiguous content. Thanks to scholarly endeavors of the type of *Begriffsgeschichte* and the *history of concepts*, we nowadays know that terminological meanings differ from one language and culture to another. Consequently, the key-terms we use as reference points depend on particular cultural investments. When we discuss the Romanian term of *popor* as meaning *peuple* (in French) or *people* (in an Anglo-American location), we will understand the totality of a state's inhabitants. This is so because *peuple* or *people* acquired precise legal meanings through the medium of the concepts of *citoyenneté* and *citizenship*. In the cultures of their origin, they symbolize genuine institutions on whose basis legal life is organized and social and civic statute is conferred on each inhabitant. The number of people living on the territory of a state forms the *peuple* or *people*. The meanings of *popor* are different in Romanian: they depend on how the user understands them. Nuances also exist in relation to the political moment the concept refers to. In the case of the 1848 thought, for instance, we can notice a certain level of French influence, especially when *popor* refers to social segments that are representative for economic life.

For a short while, 1848 intellectuals from Wallachia were won over by the idea of making the concept of *national identity* statutory by having it correspond to the common interests of the country's inhabitants. In Transylvania, though, apart from some slight exceptions (among which that of Alexandru Papiu Ilarian was only partially different), the formulation of identity revealed an insufficient understanding of the role of constructing something on legal grounds. Instead, this formulation of identity showed that it was often associated with origins, with blood and land ties. Paul Cornea holds that there is a contradiction between the realist and idealist views of the *people* (*popor*), but that 1848 Romanian intellectuals understood semantic variations following their use of *plebs* and *populus*.¹⁵ I believe that the will towards a more accurate structuring of political languages did not exist in the cultures of Central and Eastern Europe of those times. In its place, terminological ambiguity took center stage. For instance, in a subsequent historical stage, the Romanian *popor* (*people*) became a closer equivalent of *neam*, and *neam* (*kin*) meant *ethnos* (*ethnicity*) but also *națiune* (*nation*) in the sense of a community of kindred blood

¹⁵ Cornea, "Cuvântul 'Popor' în epoca pașoptistă," 230.

having cultural-linguistic and political rights in a given space. Consequently, inspired by the romantic *Volk*, *Kulturnation* loomed out in Romania instead of a political type of thought structured by the legal values proposed by the concepts of *peuple* or *people*.

With the exception of some representatives of the 1848 generation from Wallachia, neither then nor later was I able to find the constant and conscious use of *popor* as an equivalent to *populus* (in its sense of a political and legal community). In fact, political language and the collective mentality did not evolve in this direction and this led, among other things, to the inconsistent representation of the civic-liberal and leftist orientations of Romanian culture. In the absence of the same culture of *populus*, *peuple* or *people*, intellectuals preferred to more quickly build a national identity and to that end they especially used the idea of a clan. Despite the apparent similarities with the concepts of *national identity* as they are understood and employed in French, English, and Dutch cultures, the concept of *neam* is a proof that in the Romanian culture the set of values at the basis of the idea of modern *națiune* (*nation*) is not identical with that of the West.

Racial Connotations of the Concept of *Neam*

If in Wallachia and Moldavia, and later in the Old Kingdom of Romania, the lure of French borrowings did not completely disappear even after the 1848 revolutionary year, in Transylvania the German influence left its marks for a long period of time. In order to more accurately assess the evolution of the concept of *neam*—a concept which was directly related to the thesis of ethnic purity due to the Ardeal school—let us give some examples reflecting the thought of Petru Maior's disciples, since they were those who marked the nineteenth-century theory of Romanian identity. Timotei Cipariu asserted that "The Romanian does not like to get mixed with foreign blood. He has preserved this domestic antipathy to this day. [...] It will also be henceforth preserved and we see no reason to contradict this antipathy."¹⁶ George Barițiu was certain that the Romanian peasant "could not bear see his sons crossbred, not even in point of dress."¹⁷

Damaschin Bojincă and Moise Nicoară held similar ideas: they were both obsessed with racial purity. Paul Iogovici held a different opinion: he

¹⁶ Cipariu, "Uniunea," 381, cited by Mitu, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*, 268.

¹⁷ Barițiu, "Ce este panvalahismul," 42–3, cited in *ibid.*, 268.

was one of the Romanian scholars who understood and argued in favor of convergences. We should first admit, alongside other scholars of the collective imaginary from Transylvania and Banat, that mixed marriages were more often rejected than accepted in Romania. As we well know, there are explanations for this coming from both the authors of ethnicist purism and from their exegetes. Yet, no credible explanation exists to date. This does not simply concern a crisis of identity specific to the beginning of the modern era, as it would derive from Sorin Mitu's study, but an issue that affected the cultural and political manner of thought characterizing the Romanian collectivity throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The theory did not only belong to the 1848 revolutionaries from Ardeal. The last decades of the nineteenth century and especially the interwar period led to an even more acute identitarian crisis. So did the fascist and communist-nationalist dictatorships. All these events demonstrated a series of anxieties about national identity and led to periodical assaults on speculative discourses. Even though the Romanian regions with multicultural populations such as Banat, Bukovina, Crișana, Maramureș and Dobrogea were to stimulate the mixing of the population and its intercultural profile despite the exclusivist ideological movements and the periods of political-economic crisis, they would not be able to significantly influence the stereotype characterizing the Romanian imaginary collective.

Let us also give other examples, namely the theses by Vasile Conta and Aurel C. Popovici. Both intellectuals upheld a doctrinaire discourse that indicated the racial substratum of the concepts of *popor*, *neam*, *etnicitate*, and *naționalitate* (*people*, *kin*, *ethnicity*, and *nationality*). Conta stood out through his belief in the Romanian people's unity of race. In a volume of studies dedicated to Romanian history, I showed how the above-mentioned intellectual systematized the topic of identitarianism by taking the term of *race* as point of reference. Whether he commented upon Romanian identity or Jewish identity, Conta based his ideas on one and the same racist thesis. From his point of view, origins and the preservation of an entity on the basis of racial purity were paramount. He left no room for doubt on this issue when he discussed "the Jewish question" or approached the Romanian question:

Jews represent a distinct nation from all the other nations, one which is the enemy of these [...]; we can affirm that Jews are the best constituted and most distinct *nation* of all the *nations* existing in the world. First, they miss nothing to constitute a *nation*. The main issue is that they are descendants of a race that has managed to always keep itself pure¹⁸.

¹⁸ Conta, "Chestia evreească," in *Opere complete*, 647–48, 658.

In his view, the blood running through the veins of the members of a *people* was the same; this should make us believe that, as a result of faith, all these members would have similar feelings and inclinations, and they would especially share the same ideas. The intellectual's wish was to convince his readers of the need to obtain one unique opinion that would characterize Romania, which was possible only if one established the *nation* on the basis of one single *race* whose only center of gravity was represented by the state. *Neamul*, *etnicitatea*, and *națiunea* (*kin*, *ethnicity*, and *nation*) were here subsumed by the term of *rasă* (*race*). His theory therefore revealed its nostalgia for a distant past and for the archaic-peasant culture. In other words, Conta phantasized about a Romanian identity in which the individuals of one ethnic community should only marry among themselves in view of preserving racial purity.¹⁹

Aurel C. Popovici propagated the idea of the federalization of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy on the criterion of the ethnography of *neamuri* (*kins*). His biological racism derives from his books *Stat și Națiune*. *Statele Unite ale Austriei Mari* (State and nation. The United States of

¹⁹ Ibid. Also cf. Neumann, *Istoria evreilor din România*, 181–4. On Conta, see an interpretation which tried to justify his ethno-racial theories by employing an ambiguous style, without offering serious arguments. See Cîntec, “Vasile Conta și dosarul evreiesc,” no. 11, 12–13, and no. 12, 12. In this sense, I will quote a fragment in order to show what kind of arguments are brought up today in the desire to recuperate Vasile Conta's “innocent” inclination: “After revealing the diverse ethnic conflicts whose protagonists Jews had been over the years, Conta clearly rejects the solution of collective naturalization as prejudicial and dangerous for the young Romanian state. The logic and rhetoric of this discourse are based on the specific type of ‘scientific’ knowledge which positivism has highlighted and which has managed to produce a special impact thanks to its coherence and expressivity. We should particularly note that this parliamentary speech (Conta presented his theses in the Romanian Parliament in 1879) had a clear political goal, hence reading it as racist is an error or a clear proof of the reader's bad intentions.” This sentence is even more surprising given that its author negates the evident. This is another reason why I believe that intellectual history and the history of ideas deserve a special place in Romanian studies and scientific debates. The meanings of fundamental notions defining identity represent only one chapter among those that probe the ignorance and serious conceptual confusions that are likely to perpetuate them. No matter how well intentioned emotional declarations might be and no matter what cultural, political or statal group they favor, they always limit the possibility of an objective analysis and the historian's freedom of reflection. In my view, studying Romanian history and the history of cultural-linguistic and religious minorities is likely to unravel one and the same topic, namely the history of Romania. As to *the nation*—understood in its modern meaning of an administrative state form at whose organization and functioning all inhabitants participate as equal and free citizens—it legitimates itself as an object of study the moment it expresses itself by means of laws, more precisely by means of a Constitution.

Greater Austria) and *Naționalism sau democrație?* (Nationalism or democracy?). He therein wrote as follows:

As to the possibility of perfecting peoples born out of all sorts of crossbreeds, all serious scholars support the idea that only those who are not crossbred are peoples that have character. That is so since the experience of animal breeders shows that a huge difference between *races* in the case of crossbred animals leads to the formation of unharmonious, hesitant characters, hence it leads to lack of character.

Or, in another part he noted that:

[...] in order to build a superior nation, we have to avoid mass crossbreeds, blood miscegenation and ethnic promiscuity. The famous count Gobineau, the first who drew attention to the rapports between *races* and their influences on civilization, even holds that crossbreeds might be the real causes of peoples' disappearance. Following the Normand count, a people would never die out if it were to forever be made up of the same elements.²⁰

The relation *people-ethnicity-race* is obvious in this speech by the Banat-Transylvanian intellectual. "The mating of bastards" or "crossbreeding" and the introduction of civil marriages, which became a reality in late nineteenth-century Austro-Hungary, determined Popovici to support the idea of racial degeneracy. In his view, "All nations that have become great have carefully avoided ethnic assimilation."²¹ Not only did the ideologue exalt the old autochthonous ethno-nationalism, he also added new elements to it from the theory of racial classification proposed by Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines* and by Houston Stuart Chamberlain's *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*. In fact he thereby took inspiration for his imaginary construction. In a study I dedicated to analyzing Popovici's political thought, I showed how, perhaps more than the discourses of others, his own discourse could explain the features of racism and could interpret them following his own categories. His nationalism was one that pleaded in favor of racial superiority. This becomes obvious when we learn the meanings Popovici ascribed to the term nationalism, namely "the conscience of superiority to other nations" and "the struggle to impose this superiority."²²

²⁰ Popovici, *Stat și națiune*, 65.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 65–67.

²² Neumann, "Federalism and Nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy," 864–98. For the decoding of the notion of nationalism in Popovici's view, see also Roth, *Naționalism sau democratism*.

Frequently used by a category of educated people, the concept of *neam* (*kin*) in its meanings of *popor-etnie-rasă* (*people-ethnicity-race*) refers to discriminatory formulas, just like the German concept of *Volk*. It has acquired an “unusually broad” use in Romanian culture and public life. It has been widespread without having its meanings decoded and explained. Such is also the case of a set of values that could compete for expressing national identity in an acceptable European formulation. According to the linguist Alexandru Niculescu, the preference for the term of *neam* shows that there is a certain penchant for an exclusivist definition of the Romanian *națiune* (*nation*) and *popor* (*people*). This has been a penchant long outdated in relation to “times and mentalities,” but one that as such deserves even more attention:

Should we then say, in keeping with N. Iorga, that *neamul* (*the kin*) can only be the Romanian *neam*, Christian and additionally Orthodox while all the other ethnicities and religions, as we would call them today, would be left out of the *neam*?²³

Niculescu’s question is justified in the context in which we need to conceptualize history and renew the political languages destined to express Romanian culture and mentalities. His analysis deserves further thorough consideration, especially since a solution for overcoming conservative formulas has been late in coming.

Neam is a concept that also asserted itself in the Romanian political language of the twentieth century. Nicolae Iorga’s manner of expressing himself in articles and conferences putting forth formative messages is rendered below:

Among all these [reference is made here to the creation of the Ardeal School, n.n.], whatever they wanted to prove by the rapport of the nobility to the *neam*, whatever they wanted to show about the traits and mission of this *neam*, they took it all out of books and shelves, while they could have taken all that from life itself, from the core of their *neam* to which they never descended; they could have gathered invaluable aspects from the *people*’s customs, from the art of the *People*; they could have done that not only in order to bring attention to the *neam* and show to others what it meant but also to prove how much unity characterized this particular *neam*.²⁴

Iorga considered the plea for an ancestral past as being unnatural as long as Transylvanian Enlightenment scholars had not assumed their relation to

²³ Niculescu, “Neamul,” 3. See also Niculescu, “Naționalitate și naționalism,” 6.

²⁴ Iorga, “Conștiința națională românească de la Mihai Viteazul până astăzi,” 198–9.

the huge mass of Romanians. However, what united Iorga's political thought with that of the Ardeal School was the search for origins and the extrapolation of the ancestral soil. To this end they mobilized the concept of *neam* as one probing the desire to construct the idea of a convenient identity and launched it worldwide. Thought out and multiplied by one generation after another, the stereotype of pure origins was to become a creed whenever people discussed the past, present and future of the Romanian society.

As Iorga and some of his generational peers showed, this concept was adopted by the Old Kingdom, which extrapolated its meanings in the traditionalist and ethnic-Orthodoxist directions. Once national-nationalist autochthony and Orthodoxism were asserted, *neam* started to refer to the idea of ethnic identity as an exclusivist variant. The term evolved towards meanings outside one's control. In Iorga's case, *neam* had explicitly acquired the simultaneous meaning of *națiune* (nation) and *rasă* (race). Nevertheless, there were also intellectuals and Romanian publications at the time that warned against "the dangerous theories" launched under the pretext of nationalism. In this sense, "class and race hatred," the disdain for order and laws were not by chance incriminated in the newspaper *Acțiunea* (Action) by one of Iorga's generational peers. Still, considered to represent a model for Romanian historiography, the famous professor Iorga promoted for decades on end a racist understanding of this concept. Unfortunately, his ideas were adopted and multiplied by a part of his numerous disciples without being submitted to a critical analysis.

Below are only a few examples from the hundreds one could find in Iorga's texts:

[...] I propose that we create political forms derived from the very provenance of our *neam*, which is singular. We should get rid of the rags we borrowed from others, which do not fit our body. They are an offence to our body and prevent it from its just development.²⁵

Iorga's differentialism looms out in relation to the others, showing that his ideas were part of an organicist grid of interpretation. For the historian, the body should get rid of "rags" that do not fit, and in this way one can completely and definitively solve the problem of unity. This issue "cannot be found in the reality of things, but only in the duty that should be admitted by any Romanian consciousness."²⁶ Meanwhile, neighboring nations

²⁵ Ibid., 213.

²⁶ Ibid.

and minority cultural groups who were Romanians' co-inhabitants were each perceived as the symbol of a *race*:

Medieval Hungary [...] was not the proud crowning of a national life; it was the result of the pope's offering a Byzantine crown to the lord, the duke, in view of adding new provinces to Catholicism, and not to the Hungarian legacy. If only the generation of Hungarians understood this, we would be happy to extend our helping hand to a country which represents at present the organic form of the *race* it stands for.²⁷

Iorga formed several generations of intellectuals who followed in his footsteps and equally ignored the disequilibria between Romanians and linguistic minorities existing, on the one hand, in the Old Kingdom and, on the other, in Transylvania, Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș. The organicism Iorga professed in his interpretation of the identity of human groups would be internalized by many of his generational peers as well as by his disciples and political adversaries. Nae Ionescu, the mentor of the Romanian far-right organization the Iron Guard, saw in Iorga's ideas the first stimulus towards establishing a Romanian civilization:

The first who managed to put forth the foundations of a genuine Romanian civilization was Iorga following the actions from "Sămănătorul" ("The Sower," the organ of the Idyllist Movement). In fact his job, temperament and spiritual structure recommended him for that. So we found out that the Romanian state and Romanian civilization cannot be built on autochthonous ideas alone, on simply enhancing the Romanian specificity; they have a single source of nourishment—the peasant class.²⁸

A.C. Cuza, Mihail Manoilescu, Mihail Polihroniade, Nichifor Crainic, Radu Gyr, and Dan Botta resumed the old messages and exacerbated the thesis of the stranger, the minority group member, and the Jew. They used the concept of *neam* with its meaning of *race* in order to designate a distinction between Romanians and minorities, i.e., in order to distinguish between Romanians and Hungarians, Germans, Russians or Jews. They

²⁷ Iorga, "Unitatea națională în literatura românească," 264–5. See Claudio Magris's observations about Iorga's obsession with origins in *Danube: A Sentimental Journey from the Source to the Black Sea* (London: Collins Harvill, 1990), and Sorin Mitu's observations about the obsessions of nineteenth-century scholars from Transylvania regarding the Roman origins of the Romanian collectivity, *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania*.

²⁸ Ionescu, "De la Sămănătorul la noul stat românesc." See the description of nationalist mystic exaltation in Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism*.

did so in view of cultivating a Romanian collective consciousness. *Neam* therefore acquired semantic connotations similar to those of the German term of *Volk*, albeit without becoming as complex as the latter. One of the most striking theories trying to settle the issue of collective identity was by A.C. Cuza, a close collaborator of Nicolae Iorga in the early years of the twentieth century: “*Nationality* is the organic, spiritual natural power of unified blood or of *race*, endowed with certain positive traits which are lost by crossbreeding and degeneration, leading to sterility and impotency.” The same A.C. Cuza further noted that “*The nation* is the totality of individuals of kindred blood which form collective personalities enlivened by the natural power of *nationality* and each one of them working a certain piece of land as living, productive organisms.”²⁹

The authors of racial laws under the dictatorships of Charles II and Ion Antonescu were not only inspired by the Nazi ideology. As it transpires from the above passages, they had at their disposal numerous autochthonous samples for interpreting the idea of *națiune* (*nation*). Among these, the concept of *neam* in its racist meaning played a factotum role in promoting discriminatory attitudes, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. This language also justified the exclusivism practiced by Antonescu’s regime. Transnistria was among the regions destined to solve the problem of purifying the *neam*. Though the extermination method practiced by the Romanian dictator cannot be compared to that of the Nazi regime, Antonescu’s practices did generate mass homicides on the grounds of the racist principle.

The legislation of Antonescu’s state was extremely interested in promoting the biologist doctrine. Below are two of Antonescu’s emblematic speeches, both of which were inspired by the theory of identity that the intellectuals of his generation had formulated:

That’s how I grew up, hating Turks, Jews, Hungarians. This feeling of hatred against the motherland’s enemies must be pushed to its outer limits. I take that responsibility upon myself.³⁰

[...] unless we take advantage of the present-day national and European context in order to purify the Romanian *neam*, we will miss the last boat history offers us [...] I could get back both Bessarabia and Transylvania but we have done nothing unless we *purify the Romanian neam*, since a *neam*’s power does not reside in its borders but in its homogeneity and the purity of its *race*. This is my primary concern.³¹

²⁹ Cuza, “Doctrina naționalistă creștină.”

³⁰ Cf. *Bucharest State Archives*, quoted in Benjamin, “Studiu introductiv,” 37–38.

³¹ Cf. *Bucharest State Archives*, Fund of the Presidency of the Council of Ministry; see also Benjamin, “Definiția rasială a calității de evreu în legislația din România,” 133.

The racist doctrine asserted that blood origin was the primary factor determining the future of the individual and of groups. Following his discourses and speeches in front of the Council of Ministers, it is clear that the ideal of Antonescu's inclination towards "the purification of the neam" was the creation of a state based on racist criteria, similar to the identitarian ideal of the Nazis.

The concept of *neam* did not disappear from collective memory during the years of the communist regime. Under Ceaușescu's dictatorship, it reappeared in various forms: in literary writings, in historical studies and works of folklore, in folk music and everyday language. Historiography itself did not give it up and urgently cultivated ethno-cultural differentialism and neo-tribalism. Yet, in comparison to the previous epochs, the concept was less frequently used. It is interesting, though, that it managed to keep its archaic value, and its force of penetrating the audience. Since 1989, the concept has been part of the cultural, religious and political language. The most suggestive example regarding the use of the concept in the activity of public institutions is represented by the project of the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchy, which aims at building a *Catedrala Neamului* (*A Cathedral of the People*). The very idea of a project carrying such a name has generated debates, but it has especially made visible the renewed foregrounding of a concept with many discriminatory meanings.

Representing a powder-keg in the context in which Romania has a democratic form of government and aims to be integrated among the European states animated by a pluralist political philosophy, the concept of *neam* on the one hand indicates Romanians' ignorance of its meanings and, on the other hand, the option of some lay or religious ideologues to revive *ethno-nationalism*. It is not less true that, similar to the concepts of *popor*, *etnie*, *naționalitate*, and *națiune* (*people*, *ethnicity*, *nationality*, and *nation*), the concept of *neam* has not been so far explained from the perspective of intellectual history. Ignoring this kind of research is not a recent issue and it suggests self-sufficiency and many Romanians' lagging behind the science and information that animate the present-day European political credo. In my view, it would be a huge error to try and take advantage of the fact that many co-nationals do not care about decoding key-notions and, consequently, proceed to profitably revive the ethno-nationalist discourse. This is yet another argument in favor of reopening the vast chapter of Romanian identity from an academic and not a propagandistic perspective.

My observations from this paper are complemented by those of Professor Alexandru Niculescu, who has shown that *neam* is of Hungarian ori-

gin. It comes from the term *nem*, which means *sex* or *gender*, but also *category* and *species* in point of learned language. The Hungarian term *nem* is present in the words *nemes* (noble, generous) and *nemzet* (national community).³² As to the Romanian term *neam*, it started to be used in Transylvania under the influence of Hungarian, which had long been employed as the official language of the region. Apart from tradition, Orthodoxy and autochthony—elements identified by Niculescu—I also hold that in Romanian, *neam* has close or similar semantic connotations with *etnie-naționalitate-națiune* (*ethnicity-nationality-nation*). In certain cases, it even replaces the concept of *popor* (*people*). Fascinated by the word because of the permanent link it suggested to have with the rural world and its ancestral existence, with land (*jus solis*) and blood origins (*jus sanguinis*), the intellectuals of the Ardeal School transferred its use to the learned lay and religious language.

Instead of a conclusion, I will underline the fact that peasants used the term of *neam* to identify kinship relations, the family, the rural community or the tribe. For them, *neam* defined common blood origins. The racist connotations of the concept became an integral part of political ideology following the oral and written language first used by Romanians from Ardeal and then by those from the Old Kingdom. Additionally, the impulse of the German Romantic movement also essentially contributed to the enrichment of meanings in that direction. The German equivalent of the term of *trib* (*tribe*) or *neam* (*kin*) is *der Stamm*. The German equivalent of *popor* (*people*), also including the meaning of *neam* (*kin*), is *das Volk*. The pair *neam-națiune* (*kin-nation*)—like that of *Volk-Nation*—could be understood as one that reveals the key-concept of Romanian revolutionary languages from the era of the nation-state formation. Or, in interwar period, it could be assessed as representing a key-concept that contributed to the creation of exclusivist theories. In both cases, its champions made an ideal out of their ambition to demonstrate the relation between species and political thought.³³

³² Niculescu, “Neamul. Considerații filologice,” l.c., 5.

³³ For further details on the relation between the concept of *neam* (*kin*) and that of *națiune* (*nation*) and for the explanation of the meanings of the concept of *națiune* (*nation*) for Romanians, see Neumann, *Neam, popor sau națiune?*.

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The Concept of *Totalitarianism* in Romanian Socio-Political Languages¹

Victor Neumann

Europeans must find a way to rewrite history so that both the West and the East of the continent are fairly represented. This endeavor however presupposes the acknowledgment of two great truths: first, the fact that the center of suffering during World War II was located in the East, not the West; second, the fact that for four decades, citizens from Eastern European countries had to bear the yoke of communism and not the prospect of European integration. Regardless, it should be easy to accept the exact dimension of Nazi and Communist terror. After all, the European Union is an anti-totalitarian construction. In practice, however, it implies an effort in humility.

—Timothy Snyder

Like other political ideas or concepts, totalitarianism has a rich and complex history. It has been used to show that state institutions such as the crown, the parliament, law, or the army, can become the tools of a single party or a single leader under a certain political context. The concept of *totalitarianism* refers to regimes of totalitarian rule such as fascism, Nazism, communism. Both the fascist and the communist ideologies refuse and condemn liberalism. They comprise and unify all political formations in a unique group and are capable of lifting up to the rank of doctrine the idea of the mass extermination of those that represent the real or imagined enemies of the state given their origins, language, religion, culture, social affiliation or ideological beliefs. In Raymond Aron's view, total war was the distinctive feature of the twentieth century.²

Expressions such as *totalitarian spirit, a people's homogeneity, ethnic specificity, the truth of the nation, the truth of the state, proletarian dicta-*

¹ Article presented at the International Conference held in honor of Claude Lefort, and entitled: "20th-Century Totalitarianism in Comparative Perspective. Will the New Realities Change Traditional Views?" Sofia, 28–29 November 2009.

² Isaac, "Critics of Totalitarianism," 199.

torship, the avant-garde party, and the directing force belong to totalitarian socio-political languages. Pierre Hassner considers that “all the bad instincts of man as well as all the good instincts of man can lead to totalitarianism.”³ In Carl Schmidt’s view, totalitarianism can be defined as “a total enemy, a total war, a total state.” Commenting on this sense of the concept, Hassner shows that for German jurists and philosophers, the fundamental reference is represented by “the total enemy” against whom one must wage “a total war.” Or, “In order to wage ‘a total war’ one must have a ‘total state,’ that is, a ‘totalitarian state.’ This is, I believe, the essence of totalitarianism.”⁴ The critique against the totalitarian discourse was born during the interwar years, when the convergence of Hitler’s and Stalin’s regimes became visible; it was resumed in postwar times in Eastern Europe, when intellectuals like Václav Havel, Adam Michnik, István Bibó, and György Konrád promoted free thought and tried to make room for independent politics that opposed to totalitarianism.⁵

Throughout this study I will attempt to identify how Romanian culture and socio-political languages employ the concept of *totalitarianism* when referring to the recent and the communist past, respectively. My intention is to use several examples and observations in order to specify what exactly ensured the crowning of ideology and totalitarian practices in a state such as Romania. My interest in the concept of *totalitarianism* in Romanian languages is also due to the fact that political events from Eastern Europe have often been linearly perceived, they have been described and understood without appraising the structure of thought characterizing the nations that inhabit this region, without assessing the level of political culture in these societies, the idea of collective identity, or the relation between democracy and totalitarianism, as well as without understanding the languages that used to and continue to particularize national cultures.

The problem of Romanian key-concepts has led to a handicap on the part of foreign analysts of political events and, in this case, of totalitarian thought and practices, because many of these key-concepts have had double or multiple meanings—such as, for instance, *politics, administration, legislation, culture, ethnicity, nation, mainstream, and transition*. For such analysts, the conflicts generated by the region’s ethno-nationalism were due to the region’s socio-intellectual backwardness, which could be seen in their faulty description and understanding of South-Eastern Europe and

³ Hassner, “A murit, oare, totalitarismul?”

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Isaac, “Critics of Totalitarianism,” 199.

the Balkans.⁶ Such has also been the case with the issue of Sovietization and, hence, with the generalization of the totalitarian phenomenon, given a general lack of knowledge regarding the local collective mindset. In actual fact, as soon as the *intelligentsia* of South-Eastern Europe formulated the national idea on the grounds of the so-called *ethno-cultural* specificity, political labeling became misleading. As to the typology of totalitarian regimes from this region, it is based on past legacies, on the encounter between different spiritual and cultural values on one and the same territory, on peoples' intellectual prototype and structure of thought, on the presence or absence of a political culture in that society.

Apolitical History and Culture

In view of analyzing *totalitarianism*, we should identify both the differences and the similarities between the two regimes of fascism and communism.⁷ On the other hand, written history in Romania interweaves history and memory, a fact that does not benefit scientific knowledge. At other times, scholars invoke particular experiences as an incontestable argument for a generalizing interpretation. In fact, Romania's intellectual and socio-political present still bears many of the marks imprinted upon it by the connotations of twentieth-century extreme ideologies. This makes the investigation of Romanian totalitarian discourse a challenging topic, which deserves to be freely discussed without the historian circumscribing him- or herself to the stereotype that for a long time dominated Europe's political languages and collective imaginary, without his or her remaining inside a "'conceptual cage' that prevents one from thinking and shortens the time one needs before taking action."⁸

The knowledge and image of the Holocaust and the Gulag are completely insufficient and in clear disequilibrium in the intellectual milieus from the Eastern and South-Eastern European states. As to the ignorance of the large mass of inhabitants, this is due to their scant education and limited access to credible historical information. This latter aspect also explains the masses' weak political culture as well as the possibility of power-holders to manipulate them. Genuine debates on this topic have

⁶ In this sense, see Maria Todorova's observations on the modern and contemporary history of the region in *Imagining the Balkans*.

⁷ See Neumann, "Este necesară rescrierea istoriei Europei de Est?," 5.

⁸ Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, and *Conceptele și istoriile lor*, 242.

been late in coming; such has been the case with the definition or redefinition of the concepts that formed modern and democratic socio-political languages. Romania still knows too little about its recent past, about totalitarian ideologies and political systems, about fascist and communist work camps, extermination camps, and the perverse interests of the two regimes. Sometimes, it even refuses to learn about its past.

Consider, for instance, the following observations of a Holocaust survivor, the pediatrician Miriam Korber Bercovici:

I have a nephew, an admirable boy: he has just got his Bachelor degree in Letters with a paper on Prince Charming but he doesn't want to know anything about our past. He tells me that we should get over it, that it happened a long time ago. I don't complain about it, I have heard that Leszek Kołakowski had the same problem with his nephew.⁹

Could these observations be about the youth for whom knowing the past has no relevance for the present, or is this about the way in which school and mass media refer to history? It is certainly true that the above-mentioned situation is also due to the fact that elites were formed under the influence of pre-modern ideas or in the context of an apolitical culture par excellence. When we analyze totalitarianism and we have to deal with experiences, traumas, various consciences and perceptions of it, we should not only consider the impressive figure-based statistics but also the need to decode causes, to minutely know the things and reasons leading to political decisions, to the destruction of the other, of those who were socially, intellectually or institutionally marginalized, who were a minority and could not defend themselves. Another observation worth making at this point is that if today's Europe wants to go beyond misunderstandings, it should write histories freed from political partisanship and East-West polarizations.¹⁰

The Concept of *Totalitarianism* in Romanian Socio-Political Languages

The first Romanian references to the concept of *totalitarianism* go back to the interwar period; they were made by well-known intellectuals and politicians. Thus, for the parliamentary elections of 1937 the National Peasant

⁹ Stoicescu and Crăciun, "Din oameni normali am devenit psihopați."

¹⁰ Snyder, "Vest-europenii mai au încă de învățat de la est-europeni."

Party signed an electoral coalition (“a non-aggression pact”) with the legionary party called “Everything for the Country,” and thereby committed one of its greatest errors ever. In 1938, as part of the lawsuit in which Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of the legionary-fascist movement, was being tried, politician Iuliu Maniu was summoned as a witness. To one of the questions of the accused, Maniu offered a memorable observation regarding the evolution of Romanian political thought and proving his perfect understanding of the concept of *totalitarianism*:

True enough, your ideology [that of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, n.n.] is directly opposed to ours and I don’t think this country has two other parties which are more clearly adverse than ours. We are for democracy, you are for totalitarianism. The Iron Guard is totalitarian and against democracy. Mr. Codreanu’s party is anti-Semitic, our party is not anti-Semitic.¹¹

The above observation reveals Maniu’s ideological accuracy and a thought capable to make a fundamental distinction between a democratic culture and a totalitarian spirit. Iuliu Maniu’s dissociation from the totalitarian ideology and political practice of Zelea Codreanu and the legionaries is even more remarkable since it occurred at a time when fascism was on the rise.

Nevertheless, many of the Romanian intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s¹² did not have a similar orientation to that of Iuliu Maniu, or did not sufficiently ponder on the issue of political ideas. They did not see the differences existing between democracy and totalitarianism; meanwhile, their penchant towards mysticism, generalization and totality was predominant. They were to have an enormous influence on public opinion. Most of the theoretical articles of Nichifor Crainic offer an example demonstrating this latter type of thought characteristic of many intellectuals of these times:

Today one thing is certain: human reason which used to be the philosophical idol of the last century now only shows up its vainness and helplessness. [...] Reason in whose power the man of materialist civilization used to have faith proves to actually be the bitterest disillusion of our unhappy world [...]. A new world is born again from the ruins of rationalism.¹³

¹¹ Cited by Ornea, *Anii treizeci*, 70.

¹² Neumann, “Obsesia intelligenței române în perioada interbelică,” 103–21.

¹³ Crainic, “Tineretul și creștinismul” [Youth and Christianity], in *Nostalgia paradisului* [Nostalgia for Paradise] (Iași: Moldova, 1996), 12–13, cited by Ornea, *Anii treizeci*, 43.

This was the world of “the new man,” a fascist or communist world with ideals ordered on the basis of collectivist or communitarian ways of life. Romania used to have a long tradition in this respect, namely the identitarian pseudo-philosophy of “we” categorically directed against an “I,” i.e., against an individual culture. What is certain is that the individual personality was to be suppressed or subsumed by that of the collective ideal.

As far as Nichifor Crainic is concerned, the totalitarian inclinations of his thought can be derived from his notions of *organicity*, *neam* (Romanian for *kin*), *mysticism*, *racism*, and *Romanian ethnicity*, as well as from his socio-political languages corresponding to the former notions and belonging to the Romanian far-right ideology. The creation of this kind of culture was also inspired by the irrationalist movement that was fashionable in 1930s–1940s Europe and could particularly be found in the works of Spengler, Kayserling, Berdiaev, or Bergson. Despite the continued affirmation of tendencies running counter to extremism and intellectual confusions—in the works of scholars such as P.P. Negulescu, C. Rădulescu-Motru, Mircea Florian, Tudor Vianu, Mihail Ralea, etc.—the cultivation of a totalitarian mystics had become more than a fad. It was a conviction that prevented freedom of thought as well as the possibility to select and process sources or to use rational arguments. Thus, the most popular interwar Romanian intellectual, Nae Ionescu, totally and permanently supported the idea of associating religion with the national idea. His disciples followed in his footsteps and continued to uphold this option. Mircea Eliade and D. Stăniloae were also thinking in similar terms.¹⁴ They reported and subscribed to a mode of being and thought whose origins lay in the romantic past. In his appearances, Nae Ionescu went so far as to announce the era of tragedy, the totalitarianism of green shirts and Ion Antonescu’s fascist militarism, which also included the totalitarian “new man,” i.e. the man of fascism and national-communism. The impact of these ideas was so strong and deep that their persistent resonance could be found over the years in the case of the 1970s protochronists and the post-1989 neo-conservatives.

Nae Ionescu’s texts are relevant for drawing the contours of the intellectual milieu that formulated the first totalitarian doctrine:

For the time being, we will do nothing else than do away with rationalism; I am not speaking about the genuine rationalism alongside which mysticism has always lived in peace; I am referring to the Cartesian rationalism which is the overthrow

¹⁴ See Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, x.

and falsification of truth by making it unilateral. We will do away with this latter in philosophy thanks to the new anti-intellectualist movements. We will do away with it in politics too by placing under our observation the parliamentary and democratic regime [...], by favoring the organic view over the contractual view.¹⁵

After being multiplied by such an ideology, communitarian tribalism defeated democratic pluralism throughout the entire twentieth century, and the intellectual elites were always tempted to focus upon and justify the organic life of the nation to the detriment of individual freedoms and civil rights. Thus, it is not by chance that Romanian socio-political languages and discourses often fail to use concepts such as *citizen*, *democracy*, or *law*, preferring instead concepts such as *culture*, *ethnicity*, *neam* (Romanian for *kin*), and *community*, i.e., those concepts that have favored a totalitarian-type of thought. The communitarian organicism of the type professed by Nae Ionescu and his followers is considered to be the main benchmark for fascist mysticism and primitive communism and, importantly, it contradicted Marx's thought.¹⁶ Without entering into a discussion of the political practices of the two totalitarian systems, I think that in the Romanian case we also need to take into consideration the remark according to which the two systems share common cultural roots. In this sense, the fact that, in Romania, rebellions, revolutions and regime overthrows are similar proves the validity of this claim.

It is not enough for the scholar to simply apply a totalitarian paradigm for diagnosing communist regimes—a methodology that has been inspired by Hannah Arendt's book *On the Origins of Totalitarianism*. This is the case because the totalitarian paradigm cannot explain the semantic load behind the concept of *totalitarianism*, it cannot refer to its regional and national contexts, it cannot reveal the content of the legacies of the past, and it cannot indicate the socio-political languages and messages that generated the terrible tragedies of the twentieth century. Hence derives the bias dominating the discourse on *totalitarian systems* from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe; hence follow labeling or the idea of a double perspective, that of the East and that of the West. As to Romanian socio-political discourses, they have presented communist *totalitarianism* as a top-bottom power structure in which a minority of people rule over the large passive mass of individuals and impose their ideology upon the latter by means of physical and intellectual constraints. The starting point of

¹⁵ Ionescu, "Sufletul mistic" [The mystical soul], in *Roza vânturilor* [Wind rose] (Bucharest: Roza Vânturilor, 1990), 23–4, cited by Ornea, *Anii treizeci*, 71.

¹⁶ Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 130–31.

this theory is the idea that the investigation of communist elites will help scholars to understand the mechanism of totalitarian power and to identify its meaning.

Vladimir Tismăneanu and Katherine Verdery have paid particular attention to analyzing the Soviet traits of the Romanian communist regime: they have looked into its despotic rules, the theme of identity or the relations between the state-party and the representatives of humanist intellectuals. Vladimir Tismăneanu concludes that, following the example of Stalin, Ceaușescu's totalitarian system represented "a series of psycho-emotional identifications" which:

[...] made him believe he could embody historical rationality. [...] He had been raised in the spirit of the top-led revolution, and he had passionately participated at the most aberrant Stalinist excesses practiced on the territory of Romania. [...] Since it was primarily based on the supremacy of the party's nomenclature which was guaranteed by the terror which the political police instilled upon the people, Ceaușescu's regime cannot be described as a deviation from the Marxist-Leninist model,¹⁷ in spite of the fact that there were narodnicist nuances in the terminology of Romanian communist politics. More than anything else, this ideology took advantage of nationalist inclinations, it exploited and cultivated anti-Hungarian and anti-Semitic prejudices, it used anti-Russian grudges that had been deeply rooted in the Romanian soul and it encouraged absurd attempts whose aim was to demonstrate the Romanian superiority to the Western world in point of certain scientific domains (the subject-areas of the so-called Romanian protochronism).¹⁸

The above observation includes those elements which permit a better understanding of Romanian totalitarianism; it invokes the existence of an ideological arsenal which promotes fear and enmity towards domestic and outside "foreigners"¹⁹; it includes the example of the mainstream

¹⁷ In Kołakowski's view, "The Leninist-Stalinist version of Marxism was no more than a version, i.e., one attempt to put into practice the ideas that Marx expressed in a philosophical form without any clear principles of political interpretation." Cf. Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 419.

¹⁸ Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for all Seasons*. Cf. the Romanian version of the book, *Stalinism pentru eternitate*, 252–53.

¹⁹ Unfortunately, some historians continue to take advantage of the deferred reconceptualization of key-notions and abusively use the obsolete meanings by which one could define national identity. See Boia, *România*, 175–207. I refer to the chapter "Romanians and Foreigners" in which the author employs the socio-political language of totalitarian regimes. "Romania is a country surrounded by foreigners, hence derive all sorts of complexes and sensitivities." Given the survival of old ethnic distinctions among the population groups of Romania, the historian considers it natural to continue and equate the concept of being part of a *minority group* with that of being a *foreigner*, and he relates the

population's attitude towards Romanian citizens belonging to cultural-religious minority groups; and finally it highlights those features of the Romanian radical political system that worked to the benefit of a social hierarchy.

In view of clarifying the ideological orientation of *totalitarianism*, I think it is important to consider the consequences of the communist-nationalist amalgam by its contextualization and exemplification, just as it is equally important to analyze and interpret the Romanian communist regime as a limit-case situated between the model of the Soviet Union and that of the Central European states, without actually resembling either of these two. It is worth noting that the totalitarian character of the Romanian political system remained paramount during the four decades of communism and it often had far-right tones that contradicted or even excluded leftist ideals. Leszek Kołakowski noted that: "It follows that the despotic socialism of history is not socialism as Marx intended it [...]"²⁰ For instance, the party's control of the state and the benefits of the multilayered class of party activists were more important in the Romanian case than the actual name of the regime. The independent political game played by Nicolae Ceaușescu, who had made his debut in politics when Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was still the leader of the Romanian Communist Party, was to be oftentimes encouraged by Western states that were prone to find bridges of communication with states under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. All in all, Romania had become an Eastern European country having its own specificities, given the above-mentioned interests, the regional political context, as well as its national traditions and cultural orientation.

The totalitarianism practiced by Romanian national-communist leaders had roots in the elites' and masses' pre-modern type of thought, in right-wing cultural traditions, as well as in the spiritual orientation that had

foreigner within the country with the one outside the country/nation. "The category of 'domestic foreigners' becomes a double of that other category of 'outside foreigners'" Cf. *ibid.*, 177.

²⁰ Kołakowski further notes: "[...] the question, however, is how far it represents the logical outcome of his doctrine. To this it may be answered that the doctrine is not wholly innocent, though it would be absurd to say that the despotic forms of socialism were a direct outcome of the ideology itself. Despotic socialism arose from many historical circumstances, the Marxist tradition among them"; cf. Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 419. Such nuances are necessary especially since they come from an author who has developed a rational, credible critique of Marxism following in the same direction as Karl Popper, Raymond Aron, and Isaiah Berlin.

particularized Romania's Orthodox Church among its sister-churches from South-Eastern Europe. In order to understand how this submerged and quick continuity from one totalitarian system to another occurred—it only took Romania four years to make the transition from fascism to communism, i.e., between 1944 and 1948—it is important to keep in mind the fact that in postwar Romania there were no thorough analyses or debates regarding the causes and consequences of a far-right political orientation. The political class and intellectual elites of the mid-1940s did not have the time or the disposition to responsibly and correctly examine legionarism, Ion Antonescu's military and political relations to Hitler's Third Reich, the disastrous consequences of the anti-Soviet war for Romania, the chauvinist and anti-Semitic ideology of the fascist regime, the Iași pogrom or the massacre of Romanian Jews in Transnistria, etc.

The aim of the national-communist regime had been that of crowning its own radical ideology without showing any authentic interest in revealing the real social and political facets of the previous regime. Under the circumstances, Romanian communists not only drew inspiration from Soviets but also from their fascist predecessors, so that the stereotypes cultivated by the legionaries survived alongside the theory of *the enemy*. The only thing that changed was the ideological coat: *the race enemy* that had been created by the proclamation of the ethno-cultural supremacy of the mainstream population and the elimination of any group that was different on account of language, religion, or color, became *the class enemy*, promoting the domination of one single social category, that of the workers. Even though a large part of the old elite had been condemned and exterminated, the new leaders' behavior and socio-political languages were not essentially different from those of their predecessors. This can be easily understood once we admit that the concept of *enemy* was at the basis of the construction of both totalitarian ideologies; they therefore became not only easily assimilable but also interchangeable.

A fundamental role in the birth of Romanian totalitarian communism was played by the Soviet intervention, the forced imposition of Stalinist institutions, the temporary subordination to Stalin's politics, and the reconstruction of the state's administration following the ideology and material and strategic interests of the USSR. Other important aspects included: the Romanian local context, cultural legacy, non-democratic tradition, intellectuals' idealism and their apolitical stand, the absence of a civil society and of the critical spirit. To give an example, Gheorghiu-Dej's political gestures were largely inspired by the behavior of the previous Romanian elites, by the superiority complex characterizing those who

became or self-proclaimed themselves as “leaders” of state institutions, who were “unique” or “providential” and “the only ones” capable to take decisions in the name of the masses.

The Revalorization of Ethno-Nationalism

Beginning in the mid-1950s, Gheorghiu-Dej’s regime inaugurated more than a simple deviation from the Marxist-Leninist model or the Stalinist one. It did not simply refer to a shrewd manipulation of national feelings, but it especially revealed the totalitarian regime’s preference for a legionary-inspired ethno-nationalist ideology. The disastrous results of the Leninist-Stalinist ideology in Romania were real, just as its manipulation of the masses was an indisputable reality. Yet, such tendencies were short-lived or extremely versatile given that the population was poorly educated, and lacked civic and legal norms or the existence of an associated culture that could protect it in the face of all sorts of totalitarian languages and politics. As for Marxism, it never played a significant role in Romanian political culture.²¹ Not even when the proletcult orientation took center stage, following its intense promotion by Gheorghiu-Dej’s regime during the 1950s and 1960s. Like any doctrine foreign to Romanian culture, Ceaușescu marginalized and even banned the use of Marxism. For instance, Marxism courses from the universities of Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Iași were minimized and even eliminated from the curricula of schools of philosophy and history. Professors teaching Marxism became the target of attacks carried out in the name of ethno-national propa-

²¹ Despite the flaws deriving from Karl Marx’s thesis, such as the determinism of his interpretation, his egalitarian and antiliberal ideology or his idea of the superiority of the proletarian class, Marxist criticism had a certain role in cultivating the intellectuals’ opposition to the communist totalitarian regime. The example given by circles of writers, philosophers and historians from Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia is proof that the anti-totalitarian exercise as practiced in former communist countries initially drew inspiration from Marxist thought. In Romania, this influence can be found in the program of students’ demonstrations in Timișoara in the fall of 1956. That program contained some anti-totalitarian points of criticism of Marxist inspiration. Then and later, in 1989, it was clear that the population of Timișoara was better prepared than the rest of Romania in point of civic and political culture: it did not slip towards extremism and it did not answer the challenges of undermining the peaceful relation between the Romanian mainstream population and cultural-linguistic minority groups. See Neumann, “Cultura civică a Timișoarei în anii dictaturii național-comuniste,” 149–75; “Civic Culture in Banat and Transylvania,” 41–63; “Die bürgerliche Kultur in Siebenbürgen und im Banat,” 38–51.

ganda, some of them even renouncing their party membership card, as in the case of Professor Henri Wald from the University of Bucharest.²²

All in all, in Romania, the Marxist interpretation of history was marginalized or altogether abandoned in favor of an ethno-nationalist approach. Professor David Prodan from “Babeş-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca—one of the representative historians of Romanian historiography—disagreed with this new orientation of his peers and of the institution where he worked and gave up his position in the mid-1960s. Among other things, Prodan had an ideological conflict with Professor Ştefan Pascu, who had become the Rector of the University and the absolute leader of the history departments of Romanian academic institutions, a position he held between 1965 and 1989. The same “Babeş-Bolyai” University from Cluj-Napoca held the evidence of its students on the basis of ethno-communitarian criteria; it was in light of these criteria that they selected new party members or chose who to promote in student associations and party hierarchies, or who deserved to continue to work in the academic university system and in institutes of scientific research.

In this atmosphere, the group of German-language writers from Timişoara known as the Action-Group Banat (*Aktionsgruppe Banat*) was expelled from Romania at the end of the 1970s because of the Marxist-inspired criticism they addressed to the national-communist regime.²³ In a regime in which ethno-nationalism had become the preferred ideology, replacing Marx’s ideas with those of the local (national) leader went hand in hand with Ceauşescu’s excessive cult of personality and his complete break-away from the set of European values. These kinds of manifestations were not possible in Hungary after the 1956 Revolution, or in Czechoslovakia after the Prague Spring of 1968, or in Poland after the creation of the Solidarność trade union in Gdansk and after the union members’ protests from 1980.²⁴

These examples and explanations show that the situations of the various ex-communist countries were not identical, and that unlike the case of the three above-mentioned states—in which communist regimes had already entered a *post-totalitarian* stage by the 1960s and 1970s—in Romania, the national-communist regime merely put forth a new stage of *totali-*

²² I learnt this piece of information from Professor Wald himself, following our constant meetings and discussions in Bucharest between 1986 and 1989.

²³ See Neumann, “Civic Culture in Banat and Transylvania,” 41–63.

²⁴ Neumann, “National Political Cultures and Regime Changes in Eastern and Central Europe,” 228–47.

tarianism during that period. These differences were primarily due to cultural values understood in broad terms. Instead of making an intellectual and civic effort to exit the totalitarian system by an organized opposition, as Central Europe did, Romanian society once again bowed in front of the hierarchy of the party-state. The nation abdicated a second time in 1968 and this led to a continuation of the regime until 1989, when it finally ended thanks to the convincing anti-Ceaușescu and anti-totalitarian protest organized by the most emancipated urban group of Romania, that of Timișoara. This protest was the first that signaled, in despair, the material, intellectual, and moral bankruptcy of the nation.

In her book *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceaușescu's Romania*, Katherine Verdery²⁵ admits that the cultural politics of Ceaușescu's totalitarian regime intervened in view of ideologizing all social classes, and not only the elites:

In general, scholars of socialist systems mainly focused on the relation between intellectuals and the party. A large part of the rich sources of information we have regarding the socialist cultural politics comes from artists and emigrating scholars who had a direct experience of the struggle between the author and the censor, or between the historian and the party.²⁶

The author observed another important fact which has been usually ignored by historians and political analysts, namely that intellectual activity and culture are “inherently political (not in the sense of being founded upon politics but in the sense of their being interwoven with it) on two different levels: that of their encounter with alternative values within their own sphere and that of their role in reproducing society.”²⁷ Difficulties emerge once we try to define the particularities of Romania, those deriv-

²⁵ Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*. See also see the Romanian version, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*. This Romanian variant of the title (Compromise and resistance. Romanian culture under Ceaușescu) refers to culture as a general phenomenon and not as a political force, an idea which was present in the English version of the title and which implies other meanings of the same concept. Moreover, the concept of *identity* is completely omitted in the Romanian translation of the title. Or, the very issue of Romanian national identity in its various senses is at the center of the book's interest. Perhaps the change of meaning suggested by the Romanian title was involuntary or it may have been the result of the need to adapt the original title in order to answer the book-market demands of the time. Beyond this observation, in view of the clarification of meanings, it is useful to remark that Sorin Antohi was the first among eminent historians who promoted conceptual history in Romania. See Antohi, *Civitas imaginis*.

²⁶ Verdery, *National Ideology under Socialism*, 32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

ing from its historical evolution and from the diversity of its regions, which represented a contact zone among several cultures and religions, several life styles and structures of thought.

The Romanian totalitarian discourse penetrated most of the social milieu from the earliest years of the communist regime. Writers were metamorphosed into party propagandists, their literature being often marked by messages that were favorable to the official ideology. Starting with 1948, The Society of Writers from Romania and the Romanian Academy became politicized institutions. Being ensured good living conditions, many writers and members of the Academy were subordinated to the interests of the new regime, which for some of them meant the shift from an ethno-nationalist or fascist doctrine to a national-communist one. They were not so much interested in politics itself as in authority, in the possibility to dispose of people, institutions and money. The origins of this behavior could be found in a pre-modern type of culture, one that was being practiced by many intellectuals from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and which was tributary to the German Romantic creed of the nineteenth century. In this sense, making a selection of the most frequently-used words in the Romanian press from 1949, the scholar Ana Selejan underscored the dichotomy characterizing the Romanian communist language: "On the one hand, to unmask, to hate, to fight, to stigmatize, to annihilate, to combat; on the other hand, to follow, to cultivate, to cherish, to construct, to cement, to mobilize."²⁸

Totalitarian Ideology and the Snares of a Post-Totalitarian Historic-Historiographical Interpretation

After making this brief foray into the past in order to identify the origins and meanings of totalitarianism in a Romanian context, I think that its explanation should also consider the process of the formation of national consciousness from the nineteenth century when, instead of cultural modernization and the social and indentitarian-political maturation of the population, the intelligentsia preferred to be contaminated by hard-to-swallow European ideals.²⁹ Given the absence of a middle class and of a

²⁸ Cf. Selejan, *Literatura în totalitarism*, vol. I, 10: "Într-o parte: a demasca, a urî, a lupta, a înfiera, a stârpi, a combate; în cealaltă parte: a urma, a cultiva, a preamări, a construi, a cimenta, a mobiliza."

²⁹ Neumann, "Elitele și problema modernizării României," 11–19.

thorough examination of consequences, they were to completely subscribe to the organicist national idea. At first beneficial for the formation of the first Romanian state (in 1859) and for its European recognition (in 1878), the ethno-national idea was soon transformed into a tribal ethno-nationalism that periodically degenerated into xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism. This became the only expression defining collective identity during the last decades of the nineteenth century as well as during the interwar period, one which contributed to the rise of fascism, the primitive and aggressive totalitarian ideology of the legionaries.

Similar to the case of Germany,³⁰ nineteenth-century Romanian literature contributed to the genesis of twentieth-century ideological radicalism. Although there is clear evidence supporting the German influence on Romanian culture, the social evolution and political events are not identical in the two countries. Romania had its own trajectory and development to modernity, including an increased original tone in point of decreeing totalitarian doctrines. It is common knowledge today that general Ion Antonescu's fascist military regime made use of the particularistic ingredient as well as that of European national-nationalist inspiration, just as, two decades later, the national-communist regime. In both cases, communitarian ethno-nationalism had become the easiest means of mass manipulation,³¹ "a survival strategy by which the elites who were often guilty of long periods of bad government, diverted the masses' indignation towards a foreign target."³²

Alongside ideological influences and borrowings from the Soviet Union's institutional-administrative and political model of the Stalinist system, the Romanian communist *totalitarianism*, whose patrons were Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceaușescu, often employed the same weapon of nationalism. Generalizing the case of Sovietism without identifying the above-mentioned particularities would equate to discussing forms without understanding the facts and the core of the issue. A British historian noted that, in Romania, communism:

[...] introduced itself as a movement of national liberation, whose daring efforts to create a self-determined industrialized state would have crowned the secular fight for freedom. The press, the educational system, the party's presence at one's work place and in military units, all these were used to socialize (or, better said, to re-socialize) the Romanians in a nationalist sense.³³

³⁰ See, for instance, Kohn, *The Mind of Germany*.

³¹ Most of the masses no longer had a minimal political culture.

³² Gallagher, *Furtul unei națiuni*, 18.

³³ *Ibid.*, 310.

As support evidence to the above claim we can invoke the fraught relations between Romania and Hungary as a result of the protests of the Hungarian minority from Transylvania. Or we can remember the forced emigration of Romanian Jews who were sold to Israel (the first transaction dating back to 1949–1950), or the forced emigration of German-language communities who were sold to Germany (starting with the 1970s).³⁴ This reality also derives from Herta Müller's description of the special units of the Securitate (the Romanian Secret Police), whose task was to watch each and every important minority group, be they "German nationalists and fascists," "Hungarian irredentists" or "Jewish nationalists."³⁵

As to the state's collaboration with the Church, this represented an uninterrupted tradition during the nineteenth century. The mixture of religion with political ideologies and decisions goes back to the times when the ethno-cultural idea became a priority for priests, ever since Orthodoxy had become a prop of national propaganda. In this latter case, the Constantinople Patriarchy equated the Eastern Christian doctrine with philistinism and, therefore, with the renunciation of the true spiritual message of the Orthodox Church.

Contemporary Romanian historians often prefer to discuss totalitarianism by invoking the communist idea and by diagnosing the cause of most of the Romanian political drawbacks as lying in the Sovietization of state politics and administration during the 1950s. For instance, they invoke the falsification of the national history by the transfer of Moscow's ideology to Romanian culture. This only represents part of the truth, since a unilateral lens like the one mentioned above only asks for the examination of Soviet totalitarianism from the exclusive perspective of the external factor, i.e., only from the perspective of political and intellectual figures belonging to minority groups in a country in which cultural-linguistic and religious minorities were and continue to be labeled as foreign in comparison to the autochthonous community.³⁶

If we choose to underscore the limits of Romanian historiography and of its ideological orientation—in the sense of communist totalitarianism as invoked in the ideological zeal of Mihail Roller, an author of 1950s school textbooks and one of the key-figures of historical research censorship—we manage to point to both a reality and a partisan idea.³⁷ This is the case

³⁴ Ioanid, *Răscumpărarea evreilor*.

³⁵ Cited by Müller, "Cristina și butaforia ei."

³⁶ See Boia, *România*, 211–48.

³⁷ Papacostea, "Totalitarism și istoriografie," 14.

because we have in front of us a case that is limited to more or less randomly finding a culprit in the absence of knowing the complexity of facts and languages involved. Even if the Romanian press abounds in hastily announced executions in the name of condemning totalitarian communism, this does not mean that tragedies are truly discussed and understood by the intelligentsia and the wide audience. Instead, figures like Mihail Roller are more often mentioned in current everyday discourses than they were during their lifetime, and, if necessary, they can uphold the fantasist thesis of “Judeo-Bolshevism” promoted by Ceaușescu’s regime.

As a conclusion, I believe that the old and new Romanian languages regarding totalitarianism should be more minutely investigated in view of rewriting the history of Romania; to this end, our accurate theoretical knowledge of fundamental concepts and of the conceptualization of socio-political events is paramount. It is also important to study not only relevant events and the institutional changes of power structures, but also the concept of *totalitarianism* in various national languages; we need to identify the set of local and regional values characterizing this concept, just as we need to unravel the languages that lead to a particular structure of thought, to a society’s specific political culture and behavior. The construction and the content of the discourse about *totalitarianism* are, in their turn, a consequence of the diversity of such factors.

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Transition, Transitions: The Conceptualization of *Change* in Romanian Culture

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Why Have We Chosen Transition as an Object of Study?

A possible answer to this question could be our intellectual interest but also the desire to name and possibly conceptualize social change in the language of historical and political sciences. In fact, the concept of *transition* (*change*) could be found on the initial list proposed to us by Victor Neumann and Armin Heinen. Yet, to say that we were somehow directed in our choice and chose the “lesser evil” (since we will see that this cannot be considered a comfortable option for the allegedly easiest-to-be-explained concept), would be an incomplete and fundamentally incorrect answer. Our interest has largely been stimulated by the massive, recurrent presence of this term in the public space over the last two decades. Here are just a few examples: we have “transition urbanisms,”¹ transition blogs,² “five women of transition,”³ tragedies of the “couple of transition,”⁴ and also warm wishes such as “Let our transition rest in peace,”⁵

¹ <http://www.pagini.com/blog/2006/12/23/urbanisme-de-tranzitie/> (last accessed 20. 12. 2009).

² <http://tranzitiamea.blogspot.com/> (last accessed 16. 09. 2009).

³ Rodica Popescu Bitănescu, *Cinci femei de tranziție* [Five women of transition], show by the Bucharest National Theater.

⁴ Andrei Milca, “‘Boogie’ tragedia cuplului de tranziție” [The ‘Boogie’ tragedy of the couple of transition], film review, in *Cronica Română*, 4 December 2008, available at <http://www.cronicaromana.ro/index.php?editie=1766&art=91132> (last accessed 18. 01. 2010).

⁵ Radu Paraschivescu, *Fie-ne tranziția ușoară. Perle românești* [Let our transition rest in peace. Romanian language gems] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006).

and the list could go on. Overall, it seems that the concept of *transition* has become extremely eloquent.

For analyzing the evolution of the concept of *transition* in the modern period, we will focus on the Romanian principalities and the Old Kingdom, and for the post-1918 period, our interest will be vested in Romania in its entirety. Chronologically speaking, we have considered it *sine qua non* to follow the evolution of the term until present times. It has been harder to decide upon the starting time frame for our analysis: this could be either the moment when the concept of *transition* was first used in Romanian culture, or the moment when its historical transformation became coherently conceptualized. In order to investigate this issue, we started from the fact that this concept emerged when people managed to perceive the significant change of society through their direct experience. We will ignore the possibly biased and unsystematic views of “time-imposed pressures” that some scholars have considered, and we will focus instead on the impact of economic and political-institutional modernization from the middle and the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as on the concept’s evolution to date.

As we have already noted, the concept of *transition* has managed to become part of common everyday language; it has also become the exponent of a state of mind as well as a label of identity and an explanatory surrogate—one which most often has had negative connotations (i.e., whenever one cannot come up with a detailed explanation of an idea, one applies the notion of “in/of transition”). This term has been used to characterize the state of Romanian society in post-communist times and, more broadly, over the last two centuries. Existent state-of-the-art data on *transition* are doubtful or completely inaccurate. As an example, in an interview with the writer Cezar Ivănescu one reads that “Queen Mary was the one who launched the phrase *era of transition*.”⁶ Meanwhile, people regard present-day *transition* as some kind of purgatory whose final result will be the end of all troubles. Hence derives scholars’ obsessive attempt to identify the moment of its happy end. Consequently, interest in the end of transition is ever-present, so that we are no longer surprised by assertions that read: “Madonna’s concert ended the period of post-communist transition in Bulgaria.”⁷

⁶ Cezar Ivănescu, excerpt from an interview by Eugenia Guzun, *Revista Sud-Est*, 2000, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVTpzLgtxVY> (last accessed 25. 09. 2009).

⁷ http://www.realitatea.net/concertul-madonnei-a-pus-capat-tranzitiei-post-comuniste-in-bulgaria--potrivit-sna_602532.html (last accessed 16. 09. 2009).

Echoes of analyses regarding diverse facets of historical transition from other cultural spaces have rarely penetrated Romanian culture. This applies both in the case of postwar English Marxists or Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of the global system,⁸ and in the case of the concept of "great transformation" as theorized by Karl Polanyi.⁹ Undoubtedly, the post-communist transition has been better addressed, yet the investigation of translations and/or quotations has privileged concrete approaches to a special segment of transition or the experience of one country or another. Francis Fukuyama's 1989 essay on the end of history has been translated into Romanian and often commented upon,¹⁰ and so has it been the case with Samuel Huntington's writings on the several waves undergirding the passage to democracy.¹¹ Yet, more complex conceptual distinctions have rarely been addressed. This state of the matter is reflected in the small number of Romanian specialists who prefer the concept of *transformation* to the less serious concept of *transition*, one that in comparison to the latter suggests the complexity of the necessary changes that need to be implemented in Romania and other post-communist countries.¹²

In fact, the West also often avoids drawing clear distinctions between *transition* and *transformation*. Some authors favor the economic meanings of the concept: they assert that *transition* refers to a set of reforms that mark the passage from a planned economy to a decentralized market economy.¹³ At other times, scholars have criticized the concept *economics of transition* in relation to its meaning or the concrete forms it has privileged.¹⁴ Despite its detractors, the analysis of transition-related aspects has

⁸ Wallerstein, "From Feudalism to Capitalism: Transition or Transitions," 273–83, reprinted in *The Capitalist World-Economy*, Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press, 138–51.

⁹ Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.

¹⁰ Fukuyama, *Sfârșitul istoriei?* (original English title: *The end of history?*). During the same year, another publishing house published Fukuyama's extended 1992 volume on the same issue: Fukuyama, *Sfârșitul istoriei și ultimul om* (original English title: *The end of history and the last Man*).

¹¹ Huntington, *Ordinea politică a societăților în schimbare* (original English title: *Political order in changing societies*).

¹² There is one notable exception, though, one also representing a plea for conceptualizing post-communist transformation, namely Dăianu, *Încotro se îndreaptă țările postcomuniste* [Whereto are post-Communist countries heading?], 109–56.

¹³ Wehrheim, *Modeling Russia's Economy in Transition*, 11.

¹⁴ "Transition studies have been too much occupied with assessing the progress of convergence of post-communist societies towards a European standard, instead of critically engaging with enlargement as well as exploring any diversifying implications

developed both in Western Europe and in the Eastern Europe of the post-communist period. Research centers,¹⁵ magazines, and web sites¹⁶ dedicated to transition have flourished, and many universities have developed programs of study focusing on the problematic areas of transition.¹⁷ After the accession of former communist countries to the EU, one could affirm that the level of interest in the meanings of the concept of *transition* has decreased. On the other hand, important experts avoid paying attention to the post-communist transition, considering that the essential division characterizing the modern and contemporary world is that between “natural” privilege-based states and states characterized by “free access” to privileges. They use the concept of *transition* to refer to the passage from one type of society to the other. This view of history has been recently theorized by Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis and Barry R. Weingast, and it proposes a rigorous approach to *transition*:

A natural state must first of all develop institutional arrangements which allow elites to create the necessary framework for impersonal relations. Secondly, *transition* starts when the dominant coalition extends the number of exchanges among the elites and institutionalizes their free access to organizations. Those conditions that can appear in a natural state and which allow the realization of the elites’ impersonal relations are called *doorstep conditions* [...]. These are: 1) a legitimate order for the elites; 2) perpetually lived forms of the elites’ public and private organizations, including the state itself; 3) a consolidated political control over military force. The combination of these three doorstep conditions creates an environment in which impersonal relations among the elites become possible.¹⁸

As far as we are concerned, we have decided to analyze the way in which the lexical and semantic field of the concept of *transition* has evolved in modern Romanian culture. This is an exploratory study that

of the transition process and EU membership.” Paul Blokker, “Post-communist Modernization, Transition Studies and Diversity in Europe,” <http://www.eui.eu/Personal/Researchers/pblokker/CEUEUI.pdf>.

¹⁵ Let us give only two examples in this sense: the Frankfurter Institut für Transformationsstudien at Viadrina University, Frankfurt/Oder, and International Center for Transition Studies, at LUISS Guido Carli University, Rome.

¹⁶ See, for instance, *Economics of Transition* (starting in 1991), *Transition Studies Review* (first issue 1993), or www.developmentandtransition.net.

¹⁷ See, for instance, the Masters program in *Transition Studies* at the University of Giessen (<http://www.uni-giessen.de/cms/fbz/zentren/zeu/lehre/Master>), or the *Prometheus Program on Transition Studies*, at the University of Tartu, Estonia (http://ec.ut.ee/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=86&Itemid=152/).

¹⁸ North, Wallis, and Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*, 26.

means to grasp the general problem under investigation. In this sense, our main sources of analysis have included dictionaries as well as political, literary and historiographical texts.

The Concept of *Transition* during the Nineteenth Century. The Perception of Social Changes.

Nicolae Bălcescu's introduction to his 1840 book *Românii supt Mihai-Voievod Viteazul* (*Romanians under Michael the Brave*), offers a rather well-formulated view on the transformation of Romanian society in the larger context of the progress of mankind:

[...] mankind continuously advances from one transformation to another, its movement becoming ever quicker as it proceeds further; each step in mankind's life means one step closer to God; each step forward is a triumph of good over evil. History's mission is to prove this continuous transformation, this progressive movement of mankind, this development of the human mind and feeling in all their inner and outer forms, in time as well as in space. Mankind moves forward in its historical evolution under the eyes of providence but also following the laws and heading towards the goal it had previously settled upon.¹⁹

The above text is visibly inspired by Hegel's ideas. Although the term of *transition* is not used in Bălcescu's work, his notion of *transformations* indicates more or less linear mutations. The author's interest was vested in affirming the inevitable and providential character of progress in order to accept the idea of a special speed-up of change, albeit one that was exceptional and temporary. This was just the draft of a project conceptualizing historical transformation and not a completely formulated theory. Alecu Russo was another scholar of the times who referred to the idea of accelerating the pace of change:

Moldavia lived more intensely during the 16 years from 1835 until 1851 than during the five hundred years from Dragoș's foundation of the state in 1835 until our parents' days. [...] Our parents saw the light of day in a country representing their ancestral cradle; the 1835 present generation emerged from the hubbub of new ideas. [...] Just as spring is the season that breaks the ice, swells rivulets with rain, and starts the stream of torrents, so was the change of attire the starting point for people's awakening. New ideas and progress came out of the dress coat's tail and the waistcoat's pocket; the revolutionary vortex was impressive, spreading the idea

¹⁹ Bălcescu, *Românii supt Mihai Voievod-Viteazul*, 11–12.

of right and wrong in all directions and unsettling all old customs and faiths; [...] the change of clothes immediately modified the social conditions of our world as well as family relations.²⁰

Russo does not use the word *transition* in this context. Its repeated absence prompts us to wonder when exactly this word started to be used in Romanian culture. Our attempt to use Rodica Bogza Irimie's investigation of the socio-political vocabulary from the earliest Romanian periodicals brought disappointing results: not only was the very word *tranziție* (*transition*) absent therein, but the perception of change was also insignificantly reflected in this type of sources; in addition, terms such as *înmaintare* (*advancement*) or *propășire* (*prosperity*) were also seldom used.²¹ The term *transition* is also absent from Klaus Bochmann's monograph regarding the Romanian socio-political vocabulary between 1821 and 1859.²²

The Romanian Language Dictionary edited by the Romanian Academy notes that around 1830 the term of *tranziție* (*transition*) was preceded by the imposition of the word "tranzit" (Romanian for "transit") in commerce-related contexts. Thus, the newspaper *Curierul românesc* (*Romanian Courier*) mentioned that "Goods can freely transit the country" and "Tobaccos that pass through one city on their way to other destinations will be exempt from payment of tax in those cities where their passage is considered a case of transit." Following the authors of the dictionary, the notion may have been of French (from the French "transit") or German origin (from the German "Transit").²³ The same dictionary holds that *tranziție* (*transition*) first appeared in completely unexpected areas such as literature and music. In Alecu Russo's words, "A marvelous transition allows this piece to rise from the small epic proportion of a poem to that able to exalt the deepest thrusts in one's heart." Or, following Nicolae Filimon, "The orchestral part includes several harmonic transitions of exquisite beauty."²⁴

The earliest mentions regarding the *transformation* of society as a whole could be identified in the expression "epoca de tranziție" ("the era of transition"), used in Ion Ghica and Titu Maiorescu's works of literary criticism. Referring to Nicolae Filimon's novels, Ion Ghica held that

²⁰ Russo, "Studie moldovană," in *Scrieri*, 32, 38.

²¹ Bogza Irimie, *Termeni politico-sociali în primele periodice românești* [Socio-political terms in the earliest Romanian periodicals].

²² Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1859*.

²³ *Dicționarul limbii române*, 507.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 508.

“They were primarily a collection of true, dynamic vignettes of customs [...] from the era of transition.”²⁵ If Ghica limited himself to simply naming the term, Titu Maiorescu additionally attempted to provide some form of conceptualization, albeit one that was vague and limited in scope. In *Observări polemice* (*Polemic Notes*) (1869), he characterized “eras of transition” as follows:

At first they say that the so-called “era of transition” was for all countries an imperfect time and, consequently, our literary condition cannot become good overnight, it must pass through several changes before it can acquire a more aesthetical expression. [...] Once we recognize we are in transition, we recognize the legitimacy of criticism and we condemn idleness.²⁶

Due to the research undertaken by Ștefan Cazimir, we can go back in time to the year 1848 and we will find that Scarlat Vârnav employed the word *transition* in the report of the Committee of the Society of Romanian Students from Paris:

We are still in a state of transition between the phanariot obsolete and dead ideas and beliefs and the new ideas and beliefs which are not yet very clear to many of us and which haven’t been able to completely become strong convictions that can defeat the doubts that sometimes trouble us as to whether our rather backward nation will have the time to enjoy the future’s bounty and taste of the happiness smiling to it from afar.²⁷

For Scarlat Vârnav, *transition* is first and foremost a term of diagnosis rather than one having value-related connotations; in contrast, in one of C.A. Rosetti’s 1856 articles from *Steaua Dunării* (*Danube Star*), which has been unearthed by Ștefan Cazimir, we can read:

We have been in an era of transition ever since 1841. For us, everything that is foreign to the Romanian tribe and nature and all that has become obsolete, withered or rotten, whether it is education, morals, laws, or even language, all this only awaits a strong breathing to either perish or be altered. [...] What may happen during these terrible times of confusion in which everything ends and nothing has started yet?²⁸

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Maiorescu, “Observări polemice” [Polemic notes], in *Opere*, 138–9.

²⁷ *Dare de semă de Lucrările Comitetului Societății Studenților Români din Paris pe anii 1845–1846 și 1847. Piața Sorbona N^o 3* [Report of the Committee of the Society of Romanian students in Paris for 1845–1846 and 1847. 3, Sorbonne Street]. (Paris, 1848), 5.

²⁸ Rosetti, “Condiția poezilor în Principate la 1842,” quoted from Cazimir, *Alfabetul de tranziție*, 9.

The two-decade chronological gain in comparison to the *Romanian Language Dictionary* must make us prudent about the earliest use of the concept of *tranziție* (*transition*). We should note that one of the most optimistic exponents of progressivist ideas from the 1848 era, C.A. Rosetti, considered that *transition* represents “these terrible times of confusion in which everything ends and nothing has started yet.” Even though we do not know who exactly inspired Rosetti to use the concept, we are most likely confronted with a terminological transfer rather than an attempt of applying it to a social context. The concept had been used in the 1830s by the foreign travelers Charles de Bois-le-Comte²⁹ and Saint Marc Girardin³⁰ in relation to the changes that had occurred in Danubian Principalities while the two travelers discussed in French with various Wallachian and Moldavian boyars³¹ and shared with them the meaning they ascribed to the concept in question. Saint Marc Girardin’s works could therefore be read by the francophone members of the 1848 Romanian generation, C.A. Rosetti included. Based upon its use by Ghica and Maiorescu, without having felt the need to give any substantial explanation, we can conclude that by the 1860s the term *transition* had imposed itself rather strongly as a case of socio-historical change.

From Term to Concept: Transition and Modernization

We have seen that the word *transition* started to be used without being strictly defined. Rather than being a rigorous concept, it used to be and has remained a label. Conceptualization features were not completely

²⁹ “This is a mish-mash of principles, ideas and contradictory morals. It is a motley image of an era of transition which aims towards a dominant opinion, or borrowed ideas, or a general rule of behavior or language; it involves a universal uncertainty regarding rights, obligations and duties, a mixture of French and Russian ideas about independence and servilism, or liberalism and bourgeois privileges; it even contains some Turkish ideas despite their brutality” (*Călători străini*, vol. III., 129).

³⁰ “The principalities are now in a state of particular crisis. A country that is relieved for escaping Turkish oppression and which heads towards prosperity, not yet knowing its future political destiny; a representative government under Russia’s control and supervising; a society that struggles between its old Oriental customs and its new European ones, and which has more likely adopted Western forms and elegance than its spirit and character; a state of generalized transition in point of dwellings, attire, laws, and language, this is the spectacle that Romanian principalities offer to the world at present” (*Călători străini*, vol. III., 533).

³¹ Bois-le-Comte, for instance, refers to a discussion he had with the great magistrate Gheorghe Filipescu regarding “peasants’ progress” (*Călători străini*, vol. III., 103).

absent but they were closely related to the evolution of the modernization process Romania was undergoing in the mid-nineteenth century. A set of defining elements emerged in this sense, and the idea of transition towards modernity meant to adopt the Western model in the principalities and later in the Old Kingdom of Romania.³² The immediate response that loomed out was the idea that uncritically imitating the West leads to a transfer of “forms without substance” in the case of Western-type institutions whose values and functions would be in contradiction to Romanian realities. Extraordinarily and persuasively enunciated by Titu Maiorescu,³³ this view influenced the concept of *transition* as it was used in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

In his turn, Mihai Eminescu understood the gist of Maiorescu’s message and in 1871 he wrote the following to Iacob Negruzzi, from Vienna:

I have written many pages of cultural study in which I have tried to clearly come to terms with the events of the eras of transition, in general, and with the misery of the present generation, in particular.³⁴

Ion Luca Caragiale’s characters also reflected the Romanian society’s distorted transition towards modernity through their existential avatars and their language that juxtaposed the old and the new.³⁵ In a nutshell, Titu Maiorescu and later Mihai Eminescu, I.L. Caragiale and other kindred-minded fellows had similar ideas about “the era of transition” to C.A. Rosetti. In their view, the phrase was dominated by negative characteristics, yet the valorizing consensus was based on two different types of logic. Following the Westernizers’ view, “transition” was to go away and the society would then stabilize itself in a positive way. Ion Ghica clearly

³² Also see Bogdan Murgescu’s synthetic comments in *Romania and Europe*, 1–3.

³³ “The second and most significant truth we must appropriate is the following: forms without substance not only fail to be of any use, but they are completely harmful because they destroy a powerful means of culture. We will consequently say: it is better to have no education than to have bad education, it is better not to construct any picture gallery if it will lack the beauty of art, it is better not to make any statutes, organizations, honorary and non-honorary members of an association than to make them without having the spirit of association straightforwardly manifest itself in all the persons composing it; it is better not to create academies and their branches, solemn meetings, reception speeches, or annals than to make all these in the absence of the scientific maturity which alone represents their reason of being” (Maiorescu, “În contra direcției de astăzi în cultura română,” in *Opere*, vol. I., 153.)

³⁴ Eminescu, *Opere*, XVI, *Correspondență. Documentar*, 37.

³⁵ Cazimir, “Caragiale analist politic al tranziției.”

expressed this optimistic view in 1883 when he wrote to Ion Bianu that “people of the era of transition” would be replaced by “people having a higher intellectual capital and just as much patriotic zeal.”³⁶ The more influential view was Maiorescu’s pessimistic perspective according to which transition could not just go by itself since it pushed the society in the wrong direction; consequently, the correct solution was represented by the society’s need to return to the Romanian essence from where it had started, and to adopt the institutions (forms) corresponding to this essence. Below is Mihai Eminescu’s formulation of the above idea in 1880:

Even though the era of empty forms which has been reigning for over twenty years in our countries could be explained, albeit not justified, through the term of “era of transition,” it is obvious that the tasks overwhelmingly imposed upon us by the transition seriously dictate that we leave the wrong path behind, that we consider the true state of the country more clearly and that we more accurately judge what its needs are.³⁷

During the next decades the phrase *era of transition* and its derivatives continued to be especially used with negative connotations³⁸ and without any preoccupation for conceptualization. Literary critics were those who were most closely interested in the issue of transition. Garabet Ibrăileanu investigated nineteenth-century literature from the perspective of a society in full process of transition, a phrase he repeatedly used in his texts:

But Alecsandri did not love liberalism; he did not understand that when introduced in a feudal country in which it had to be introduced, liberalism necessarily had to appear as an exaggeration and it had to give birth to many ridiculous, inherent aspects of *the era of transition*, just as “Junimea” did not understand either.³⁹

The same Ibrăileanu held that “the morals from a period of transition” represented “a mixture between the old and the new, between the indigenous and the foreign, etc.”⁴⁰ This was a means to explain the complex process of transition, one often perceived as a negative phenomenon. In his pes-

³⁶ Cited by Nastasă, *Generație și schimbare în istoriografia română*, 15.

³⁷ Eminescu, “Studii asupra situației,” 19.

³⁸ For instance, in an 1888 conference, conservative Ion M. Kostachi Epureanu stigmatized customs protectionism as a “transitory system” which “would never win the right of becoming a fortress of economic sciences” (quoted from Demetrescu, *Influența școalei economice liberale în România în veacul al XIX-lea*, 132.)

³⁹ Ibrăileanu, *Spiritul critic în cultura românească*.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

simism, Ibrăileanu considered that the mark of transition and the phenomenon associated with it was *Caragialism* (i.e., the way in which the well-known Romanian writer Caragiale had managed to record the comic and absurd tones of the time's Romanian society). His analysis combined literary elements per se with references from the New Testament:

Yet the gap between old culture and genuine European culture is filled with all sorts of "Caragialisms." The entire country's leap over this gap in order to reach European culture (in its Romanian variant) to whatever degree represents the measure of the future evolution of Romanian society in case we could have a normal type of evolution. Under the circumstances, all the 'peoples' that have finished their probation period in the fatal "Caragialism" of the periods of transition, will become "nations."⁴¹

In what regards socio-political literature, *transition* was less frequently used than in the case of literary criticism. For instance, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea launched the concept of *neoiobăgie* (*neo-serfdom*) (1910) in order to name the hybrid organization of modern Romanian society by combining a modern-capitalist framework of urban property relations with relations of a rural serfdom type. Even when he invoked the idea that the passage towards modernity presupposed the passage of time, he preferred to use other expressions: "In time the new establishment will be achieved, embodied and enlivened via the cultural and moral education of the masses, via schools and the very functioning of institutions since it is self-understood that some time must pass before institutions adapt to people and vice versa."⁴² We can suppose that Dobrogeanu-Gherea avoided the concept of *tranziție* (*transition*) because he considered that *neoiobăgia* (*neo-serfdom*) was not a stage towards modernization but a wrong type of evolution that had to be overcome so that Romania might have a chance to know true development.

Even more surprising is the absence of the term *tranziție* (*transition*) from Ștefan Zeletin's major writings. Even though he had an evolutionist-stage wise view on the history of the bourgeoisie and capitalism, he did not use the term of *transition* even when he described the passage from one stage of "swinishness"⁴³ to another or when he referred to "the process of the bourgeois revolution" in the Romanian Principalities:

⁴¹ Ibrăileanu, *Scriitori români și străini*.

⁴² Dobrogeanu-Gherea, *Opere complete*, vol. 4, 11.

⁴³ Cf. Zeletin, *Din țara măgarilor. Însemnări*, 43–57.

The process of the bourgeois revolution developed really quickly in our country, it took daring leaps that superposed new bourgeois elements on old feudal aspects in a way that deployed the bitter sarcasms of reaction. Franz Oppenheimer shows that under present-day conditions societies seem to shorten the period of their evolution and gives the example of Japan. One could also claim the same thing about Romania: after only entering the revolutionary bourgeois era in 1829 as a poor and backward relative of the great global bourgeois family, it has traversed in less than nine decades the path on which Western bourgeoisies have been vegetating for centuries. Thanks to the 1918 reforms that do away with the last remains of our old feudal agrarian regime, we can consider that the Romanian bourgeois revolution has almost reached its end.⁴⁴

The word *transition* is not used either in the description of the various stages of capitalist development (following the model given by Werner Sombart) or when Zeletin prophetically calls for a revolution of the soul that would put an end to the disharmony between mentalities and Romanian economic realities and would replace it with a firm bourgeois development similar to that of the Western world. One might suppose that the reasons why Zeletin avoided the term *transition*⁴⁵ was given by the synonymous expressions he was accustomed to use: “revolution,” “transformations,” “the dissolution of the old regime,” and “the creation of the new modern regime.” He already had his own idea about the mechanisms and the sense of Romania’s transformation in the nineteenth century. Some of his observations underlined the idea that the “bourgeois era” had started in the principalities once these aspects entered the sphere of activity and interest of great European powers, especially the British. The Romanian economic and social evolution went through several stages similar to those of capitalist countries and it headed towards a neo-liberal type of development. It should be noted, though, that not even in this case did Zeletin use the term *transition*:

If one traverses with the mind’s eyes the drama of mankind’s development, it seems that the normal and natural life is that which was before and will be after the capitalist era: it is a reconciled life in which all people will be able to equally use

⁴⁴ Zeletin, *Burghezia română*, 51–2.

⁴⁵ Two reasons seem plausible to us. One refers to the fundamentally negative connotation of the term in Romanian culture, which was contrary to Zeletin’s view on the essentially progressivist character of Romanian modernization. The other reason refers to the absence of the term and even concept of *transition* from Werner Sombart’s analyses; instead he preferred terms such as *Übergang* (passage), *Entstehung* (genesis), *Werden* (becoming) and *Neugestaltung* (restructuring). Cf. Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, vols. 1–3 (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1916–1919).

the goods of nature in order to satisfy their needs. In this millenary drama the capitalist era presents itself as a small interval, a period of anarchy and agony that mankind must rise from in order to significantly increase its powers of production. Then, with its powers multiplied by a thousand, it will return to the same peaceful life it used to previously lead.⁴⁶

Ștefan Zeletin's oeuvre gave rise to many critical reactions. Some came from the Marxist left, especially through the voices of Lotar Rădăceanu and Șerban Voinea; others came from peasant party members, especially Virgil Madgearu; and yet some others came from the liberals represented by Eugen Lovinescu. In the case of historical-theoretical delimitations, the term *transition* is very seldom used.⁴⁷ As to the issue of modernization, Zeletin's detractors reacted to his observations about the various stages of evolution characterizing Romanian capitalism and his eulogy of the Romanian bourgeoisie.

The most influential and substantial discussion on the issue of the Romanian phenomenon of transition towards modernity belonged to literary critic Eugen Lovinescu. His point of view was synthetically presented as follows:

Unlike Mr. Zeletin who applies historical materialism in its entirety and who has recognized in our civilization a natural process from substance to form, from a capitalist system of the circulation of goods towards a bourgeois legal-political structure, I support the anticipation of the ideological revolution on the economic revolution and hence the existence of a reverse process from form to substance stimulated by the law of interdependence between moral and material life.⁴⁸

Especially referring to the theories of Gabriel Tarde and Gustave Le Bon, Lovinescu postulated the importance of the law of imitation and the tendency towards synchronism in view of adopting the Western model in the nineteenth-century Romanian Principalities; he considered that Western ideas gradually led to the transformation of Romanian realities. Though he only occasionally used the term *transition*,⁴⁹ preferring synonyms such as "revolution," "synchronism" and "transformation," his entire endeavor was centered upon the very concept of *transition*.

⁴⁶ Zeletin, *Neoliberalismul*, 94.

⁴⁷ For instance, Șerban Voinea only passingly mentions "forms of transition towards capitalism." Rădăceanu and Voinea, *Oligarhia română*, 190.

⁴⁸ Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, vol. III, 172.

⁴⁹ Providing an overview of Zeletin's arguments, Lovinescu affirmed that "the post-1866 regime represents a regime of transition from the regionalism of the agrarian stage to the bourgeois democracy which we are perhaps on the verge of entering." Lovinescu, *Istoria civilizației române moderne*, vol. I, 24.

The Concept of *Transition* during the Communist Period

The communist regime brought with it substantial changes in what regards the conception of historical transformations, because Marxism had a rather well thought-out theory about the periodization of history depending on means of production and the social organization they generated. In a coherent Marxist view, the passage from one form of organization to another had to be the result of economic and social contradictions that later determined contradictions at the level of political suprastructure and, finally, the replacement of the old type of organization by a new, superior one.

Applying this theory to the study of history⁵⁰ was not at all simple, especially in the case of older eras for which the available historical information was very scarce and hardly relevant for a Marxist argumentation in favor of historical processes. Since the passage from capitalism to socialism had its own historical specificities that distanced it from the Leninist theory of revolutions, which demanded great logical efforts in view of integrating its presentation within the scheme of dialectic and historical materialism, it felt natural to apply Marxism to historical transformations and focus on the passage from feudalism to capitalism. The result, however, was poor, and it also reflected the rudimentary way in which the exponents of the communist ideology in Romania had appropriated Marxism (especially via the Stalinist “vulgata”). Thus, in his attempts to deal with the passage from feudalism to capitalism and with the 1848 revolution, Mihail Roller and his followers were confronted with many logical difficulties, and produced rather incoherent narratives regarding the relation to Marxist theory and the issue of aligning it with available historical data.⁵¹

The second part of the 1950s saw a rejection of dogmatism as illustrated by Mihail Roller and a reaffirmation of the national tradition of Romanian historiography. This preceded the reorientation of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s regime from a strict subordination to the Soviet Union to a gradual distancing away from Moscow. This was followed by an opening towards other centers of world power and a broadening of the inner basis of the regime following the recuperation of some pre-communist national values. In the context of the transition to national communism,

⁵⁰ For the evolution of Romanian historiography during the communist regime, we have especially referred to Georgescu, *Politică și istorie: cazul comuniștilor români*; Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive în România “democrat-populară”*; Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*.

⁵¹ See an analysis of these incoherences in Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 150–6.

the regime solicited historians to write a monumental treaty about the *History of Romania*; this obliged them to formulate some official points of view regarding all the problematic areas of the national history. Under such circumstances, debates about the passage from feudalism to capitalism seemed to open up the possibility for drawing up a historically specific and firmer conceptualization that would take into consideration the replacement of one means of production by another and the genesis of a new form of social organization.

Despite these intentions, the treaty on the *History of Romania* did not offer a systematic view on historical processes, but merely proposed “a fragmentary determinism” without too many theoretical valences.⁵² The deficit in point of theorization was due to some contradictions that appeared among the historians who participated in writing the treaty. Andrei Oțetea, the editor in charge of volumes 2 and 3—the historian who had the most systematic view on the process of passing from feudalism to capitalism—faced a lot of resistance against his attempt to impose the opinion according to which the already-invoked process of essential transition represented a case of “second serfdom.” Oppositions came from several directions and it is hard to assess today what was the decisive reason behind these misunderstandings. Florin Constantiniu, the volume’s secretary, considered that David Prodan played the decisive role, since he was deemed to be the one that had categorically affirmed: “I do not see the emergence of a second serfdom in Transylvania.” He furthermore noted that “the resistance of the Apuseni Mountains historian [...] buried the idea of second serfdom. So as not to worsen the existent divergences with academician D. Prodan, Andrei Oțetea announced that he would no longer use the controversial concept in the treaty.”⁵³

A more nuanced analysis of these polemics reveals the fact that some of the opponents, particularly David Prodan and Ilie Corfus, valorized the debate “in view of de-Marxization,” yet the decisive aspect was that “the political factors rejected the idea of ‘a second serfdom.’”⁵⁴ One of the participants in these debates was Henri Stahl, a champion of a more rigorous theoretical view on history. He considered that, in his turn, Andrei Oțetea was not really interested in theoretically analyzing the Romanian transition, and as such he tagged to give up the criterion of forms of or-

⁵² Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 165, 167.

⁵³ Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 263. A report that does not contain details but that recalls the radicality of its opposition can be found in Prodan, *Memorii*, 126.

⁵⁴ Mihalache, *Istorie și practici discursive*, 167.

ganization in view of drawing up the periodization of history, and favored instead conventional names such as “the medieval era” and “the modern era”⁵⁵ which also absolved him of the necessary effort to theorize historical transitions. Consequently, the term *transition* was replaced in the above-mentioned treaty by a more neutral and amorphous phrase: “the passage from feudalism to capitalism.”⁵⁶

Even though the term *transition* continued to be occasionally used during the period of gradual passage to national-communism, it was not considered to be a concept with well-contoured defining elements. More broadly, the national-communism characterizing the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu was confronted with older anti-theoretical propensities of Romanian historiography, revitalizing them under the sign of the exuberant rediscovery of Romania’s diverse national traditions. Under the circumstances, no theorizing attempts had any chance of success, and a secretary of the Central Committee on the issue of ideological problems allowed himself to affirm “Marx, again?”⁵⁷ and he thus closely mirrored the reversal of the ratio between Marxism and nationalism in the regime’s ideology. Consequently, some historians’ attempts to approach broader issues of the historical evolution stopped at a poor level of conceptualization,⁵⁸ while authentic preoccupations in this respect⁵⁹ remained outside the scope of interest of the historiographical mainstream whose priorities were entirely different.

Two significant contributions appeared in the mid-1980s, each bringing back to people’s attention the concept of *transition*. The first belonged to Ilie Bădescu,⁶⁰ who resumed the debate about the modernization of Romania and tried to combine Imanuel Wallerstein’s theory of the modern global system with suggestions given in Mihai Eminescu’s journalistic works. In Bădescu’s view, the passage to modernity was dominated by the

⁵⁵ Stahl, *Probleme confuze în istoria socială a României*, 165–6.

⁵⁶ *Istoria României*, vol. III. *Feudalismul dezvoltat în secolul al XVII-lea și la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea*, 585–91.

⁵⁷ Cited by Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 369–70.

⁵⁸ An example in this sense is Cristian, “Considerații privind începutul epocii moderne în istoria universală,” 403–14. See also Isescu, *Introducere în studiul istoriei moderne a României*, particularly 23–31.

⁵⁹ The most significant works in this sense were those of Henri H. Stahl, who theorized a tributary means of exploitation that fundamentally undermined the Marxist scheme of conceptualizing history following the means of production, and whose contribution had almost no echo among the time’s historians (Stahl, *Teorii și ipoteze privind sociologia orânduirii tributare*; cf. Constantiniu, *De la Răutu și Roller*, 341–51).

⁶⁰ Bădescu, *Sincronism european și cultură critică românească*.

process of the peripheralization of the principalities in relation to the West. Reactions to the distortions this process brought about generated a critical culture that conferred a theoretical priority to Romanians (through Mihai Eminescu) on a global level. In perfect accord with the nationalist and protochronist idiosyncrasies of the author, we can notice a certain liability of theoretical references hidden under a voluntarily sophisticated and ambiguous language. (Bădescu, for instance, preferred to use the phrase “the suburbia of the metropolis” instead of the consecrated term of “periphery.”) On the other hand, Daniel Chirot’s contribution remained unnoticed: he was the one who had previously discussed in more rigorous sociological-historical terms “the transition [of Wallachia] to modern colonialism.”⁶¹ Though he referred to the period of 1821–1880 as if this was a genuine era of “heroic culture” in which Romania joined “the major tendencies of European history,”⁶² Bădescu avoided using the concept of *transition* and preferred instead the notion of “synchronization” in order to designate the positive nature of historical evolutions and the “inter-species” evolution in the case of periods difficult to be subsumed by one or another of the historical typologies we have taken into consideration.

The term *transition* held a central place in Ștefan Cazimir’s studies.⁶³ The author revived the concept and linked it to the pre-communist analytic tradition to which he added some new, very pertinent observations packaged in a luring language. Regardless and in spite of many punctual contributions to the concrete-historical analysis of “the era of transition” from the mid-nineteenth century—among these, we should mention the debate about the role of women in the promotion of civilization’s innovations—Cazimir was not interested in strongly theorizing the concept of *transition*. On the contrary, starting with a reference from Borges according to which “all eras are in transition,”⁶⁴ Cazimir pleaded for the consubstantiality between mentalities specific to “the alphabet of transition” from the mid-nineteenth century and the psychological structure of the Romanian people:

The lesson of the 1830–1860 era is that of a fight that was carried out with intelligence, tact and flexibility, consistently rejecting impatience and brutality, strain and oppression. Following its convergent ethnic, geographic and historical bases, the psychic structure of the Romanian people has always included among its inalienable traits features such as temperance, tolerance, repudiation of excesses, pru-

⁶¹ Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society*, 109–37.

⁶² Bădescu, *Sincronism european*, 10, 115–224.

⁶³ Cazimir, *Alfabetul de tranziție*.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

dence, wit, or the right to smile. Foreign to any kind of extremisms, it has simultaneously rejected aggression and fear, fanaticism and apathy, the unique criterion and the absence of criteria. Within this framework of fidelity to one's self, the alphabet of transition remains an eminent manifestation of our collective psychology which deserves to be mentioned as a perennial model.⁶⁵

We should also mention the subversive sense of this civic-existential plea from the mid-1980s, a context in which historical exactitude and conceptual rigor completely became collateral elements.

Post-1989 Transition in Its Entire Splendor

Under the pressure of the 1989 revolutions, the collapse of communist regimes meant the beginning of *transition* for former European communist countries. The concept imposed itself on designating the evolution of these societies, entering in competition with the term *transformation* in the academic milieus. Diverse explanations have been suggested regarding the reasons why *transition* finally won the competition in the public sphere.⁶⁶ Beyond these, what probably mattered most was the fact that a *transition* seems easier to be fulfilled than a profound *transformation* and offers the image of a more clear direction to follow: it designates the way towards a Western-type of society based on a multi-party democratic regime and a capitalist market economy.

The first revolutionary proclamations from December 1989 did not contain the term *transition* though it was occasionally used in Romanian-language broadcasts by foreign radio stations.⁶⁷ The concept appeared in the debates from the first reunion of the Council of the National Salvation

⁶⁵ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁶ Just an example: "The *Economics of transition* was born out of the collapse of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe. This collapse is probably due to two reasons. First, it was not politically suitable to call East-European economies by their real name—developing or underdeveloped countries. That would have been at odds with the political objectives of making the former Communist countries feel treated as equals by the Western community and of preventing possible nationalistic tensions in that part of the world. Second, a new name had to be coined to justify policies that proved rather ineffective in the Third World experience but were proposed once again—sometimes in different versions—in the East-European context. One may thus wonder whether the *economics of transition* makes any sense at all, or whether its usefulness may be better perceived from other perspectives." Colombatto, "On the Concept of Transition," 269.

⁶⁷ Thus, on 22 December 1989, at 7 p.m., *Radio Free Europe* broadcast a White House speech which wished the Romanian people "a peaceful transition towards democracy" (see, *E un început în tot sfârșitul...*, 442).

Front on 27 December 1989, when Marțian Dan passingly urged people to agree that “we are in a period of transition” and we need to avoid falling into “anarchy.”⁶⁸ *Transition* subsequently established itself in public discourses regarding the post-revolutionary course of Romania. It was rather quickly adopted by journalists and specialists from various socio-human disciplines, especially economists.⁶⁹ Following the testimony of Tudorel Postolache, on the very first days of 1990, the National Institute of Economic Research focused its attention on “the scientific substantiation of Romania’s transition to market economy.”⁷⁰ Since the new representatives of power deplored the absence of “an economic theory which would permit the transition from a centralized-controlled planning to market economy,”⁷¹ economists asked for the substantiation of the government’s new policies in their domain.⁷² The “Draft regarding the strategy of bringing about market economy in Romania,”⁷³ which was handed down to the government in April 1990, recognized the need to undertake a more thorough and comprehensive analysis of the problems of “Romania’s transition to market economy.” Correlating Romania’s historical experience with previous debates on the issue of *transition*, Postolache and his collaborators noted that this was not the first *transition* of its kind in Romania and argued that a historical perspective was also important:

Why should we speak of a new “transition” to market economy? Because Romania, like the rest of Eastern Europe, traversed another transition to the market economy in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, we won’t be able to write a comprehensive theory of the new transition unless we understand at first all the theoretical consequences deriving from the first transition.⁷⁴

This is not the place to discuss all the avatars of the commission Postolache led, the (lack of) realism of many of his prognoses, or the very small degree to which his recommendations contributed to the substantiation of economic politics in the 1990s. We will only note that the “Draft regard-

⁶⁸ *Caietele Revoluției* 2, (4)/2006: 38.

⁶⁹ The first article dedicated to *transition* in the newspaper *Adevărul* belonged to the economist Aurel Iancu (“Acum, o perioadă de tranziție.” We owe this piece of information to PhD candidate Matei Gheboianu and we thank him for it.)

⁷⁰ Postolache, *Economia României*, 19.

⁷¹ Brucan, *Piață și democrație*, 30.

⁷² http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.http_act?ida=37132 (last accessed 30.01.2010).

⁷³ The text of the draft was published as early as June 1990, and was republished in Postolache, *Economia României*, 763–810.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 35, note 3.

ing the strategy of bringing about market economy in Romania” placed at its center components such as the liberalization of price or foreign trade, the privatization of a large part of the economy, and the fulfillment of the convertibility of the Romanian currency, the leu. Postolache underscored the necessity of “a broad national consensus” for managing the inevitable social costs of *transition*.⁷⁵

Public debates regarding “transition” did not wait for the specialists’ sophisticated analyses. They outstripped them and from the very first months of 1990 they were dominated by two main controversies: the duration and the concrete form that *transition* would take.

In point of duration, the debate heated up when in a January 1990 interview to *Le Figaro*, Silviu Brucan asserted that “It would take Romanians twenty years to get used to democracy.” He was immediately accused of “offending the dignity of the Romanian people,” but soon afterwards many of his previous detractors agreed that Brucan’s estimation might have been in fact too optimistic.⁷⁶

The debates about the concrete form that *transition* would take focused on both the political and economic fields. The controversy from the political field manifested itself in relation to the unfortunate expression of “original democracy” that Ion Iliescu had put forth, as well as in relation to the accusations of “neo-communism” brought against him and the Front of National Salvation. The disputes from the economic field centered on the alternatives for either “a shock therapy” that followed the Polish model of the “Balcerowicz plan” enforced on 1 January 1990,⁷⁷ or a “gradual transition.” In this latter controversy, the Postolache commission reached the following compromise:

The strategy we choose could be defined as a gradual quick-paced transition within which the implementation of legal and economic mechanisms that are strictly necessary for the functioning of a market economy is carried out at an accelerated pace (within at most 2–3 years—while ensuring an adequate social protection for the entire collectivity).⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid., 768–9.

⁷⁶ Brucan, *Generația irosită*, 239–40.

⁷⁷ The concept of “shock therapy” related to the post-communist transition was launched by the American economist Jeffrey Sachs who had already participated at the drawing-up of the “Balcerowicz plan” in September 1989 after he had previously been a counselor to the Bolivian government urging them to apply this type of economy.

⁷⁸ Postolache, *Economia României*, 768.

The evolution of the post-1990 Romanian economy and society distanced itself from this projection. *Transition* gradually imposed itself more as a label for the post-communist period than as a well-articulated concept that would reveal the way to be traversed. Vladimir Pasti's approach is exemplary in this perspective. The author also lingered over the concept of *transition* and specified that there are two complementary transitions: one "looks towards the outside, its aim being to transform the former Romanian socialist society in one capable to adapt itself to the European and global systems that get born only now, at this end of century"; the other transition "looks towards the inside," and should have ensured setting down the country on a trajectory that was meant to avoid the trap of underdevelopment.⁷⁹ Arguing that transition was more spontaneous than coordinated,⁸⁰ Pasti avoided the discussion about the concrete transformations undertaken by the Romanian society and focused on the dynamics of the political-economic action of its main elites: administration, enterprise and financial technocracy. In this endeavor, references to other countries' experience of *transition* were rather limited and overly criticized.

More specialized analyses appeared during the second half of the 1990s, which saw an increase in the number of Romanian specialists participating in international conferences and projects. These analyses more systematically made use of the conceptualizations regarding the post-communist *transition*. In this sense we remember the contributions of Dumitru Sandu regarding the sociology of transition,⁸¹ and those of Daniel Dăianu on the economy of transition.⁸² Philosopher Radu Florian supported a set of historical and conceptual reflections on the margin of the *transition* towards modernity in Romanian history. Several essays published in the magazine *Societate și cultură* (*Society and Culture*) were included in a collective volume that was published in 1997.⁸³ The authors started from Maurice Godelier's definition according to which *transition* "designates a specific stage in the evolution of society, during which there

⁷⁹ Pasti, *România în tranziție*, 21–5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁸¹ Sandu, *Sociologia tranziției*.

⁸² Dăianu, *Transformarea ca proces real: de la comandă la piață*; Dăianu, *Încotro se îndreaptă țările postcomuniste?*.

⁸³ Florian, Hurezeanu, and Florian, *Tranziții în modernitate*. One of the authors of this volume resumed the historical analysis of the nineteenth-century transition in Hurezeanu, *Civilizația română modernă*, its most consistent chapter being "Epoca tranziției. Epoca revoluțiilor" [The era of transition. The era of revolutions], 39–237, without any attempt at definition or theorization.

appear new economic and social rapports that would sooner or later be generalized to a greater or lesser aggressive extent and would become the conditions for the functioning of a new society.”⁸⁴ Despite its frequent use, an inconclusive definition of the goal to be reached persists in the case of the concept of *transition*. “The current transition of Romanian society does not have a predetermined direction to which it could evolve,” and the above-mentioned authors suggest that the attempts to offer technocratic solutions to the problems of *transition* must be replaced by political ones. They opt for social democracy and consider it to be more efficient than neo-liberalism.⁸⁵

Some of the specialists’ conclusions have been adopted by politicians. Thus, in 1996, Ion Iliescu put forth the following ideas:

The term of *transition* with its several meanings circulates in the political and journalistic milieus. [...] I understand the concept of *transition* much more broadly, as the set of changes that take us to a new kind of society. In this understanding, transition comprises all the processes of change—political, economic, social, or related to mentalities—until the new type of society will completely loom out. This is a historical process that will last for several decades. In its turn, domestic transition overlaps and is included in the regional and global transition of the present-day civilization, from the industrial to the post-industrial, information-based society. This happens in the context of an ever more marked globalization of processes and of the amplification and realization of the global problems of humankind. These elements have imposed the concept of long-lasting development in keeping with the requests for environment protection and the interests of the future generations as to this environment and the resources our planet has.⁸⁶

The ex-president of Romania felt entitled to assert that from a political point of view, “transition has ended and we are now in front of a stage of consolidation of the new post-communist society,” while in the other domains transition was going to last for a very long time, perhaps even endlessly:

I think we should abandon limiting approaches and re-evaluate present-day *transition* from the perspective of the above-mentioned ideas, even if some people will accuse us of projecting the transition as if it were a permanent stage. I would even say they would not be too wrong in that assertion, given the permanent innovative process implied by a national program or a strategy of socio-economic development in a world which is itself in continuous change.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Godelier, *Transitions et subordinations au capitalisme*, 7.

⁸⁵ Florian, Hurezeanu, and Florian, *Tranziții în modernitate*, 318–60.

⁸⁶ http://www.presidency.ro/index.php?_RID=det&tb=date_arhiva&id=791&_PRID=arh (last accessed 20. 09. 2012).

⁸⁷ Ibid.

In his turn, after becoming president, Emil Constantinescu, Ion Iliescu's counter candidate in the elections of 1992 and 1996, asserted that the main element of *transition* would be the change of property relations—consequently, in 1999, he would declare that, in its essence, *transition* had ended: “A new structure of property means a new social structure, it will have to be the basis of a new politics [...] *transition* has ended in point of its institutional and legislative aspects.”⁸⁸

Beyond the irony of having an exponent of anti-communism like Emil Constantinescu adopt a Marxist-inspired determinism (namely that property relations determine the nature of society), we must mention the fact that the 1990s was also the period during which attempts were made to define the features of *transition* and the ways to overcome it. Obviously society, politicians and specialists had all grown tired of Romania's long-lasting transition and considered that it could not last for long. The clearest projection in this sense belonged to Lazăr Vlăsceanu; this time, it was based on a much stricter conceptualization and set the construction of democracy and liberal economy as its goals:

- *Stage I: transition* consists in the construction of the institutional infrastructure of democracy and economy and in ensuring macroeconomic stability.
- *Stage II:* coincides with the country's exit from transition, a moment that would be marked by the beginning of economic growth. The emphasis will henceforth fall on sectorial development, intersectorial harmonization, as well as on the consolidation/further imposition of formal and informal institutions that stimulate productive performances in a competitive economy and society thanks to a strong government and its efficient governing. Another important aspect during this stage is the international (European) contextualization of development which consists both in the Europeanization of institutions and in ensuring the capacities of national governing in view of a new European convergence.⁸⁹

Following the resumption of economic growth in 2000 and the intensification of negotiations for accession to the European Union, Romania was step-wisely getting towards the end of *transition*. Politicians' speeches announced the end of *transition*, whether it was the case of Victor Ciorbea (“the light at the end of the tunnel”⁹⁰), Călin Popescu-

⁸⁸ *Ziua*, no. 1579, Monday, 6 September 1999; accessible online at <http://www.ziua.net/display.php?id=30771&data=1999-09-06>, accessed on 20. 09. 2009.

⁸⁹ Vlăsceanu, *Politică și dezvoltare*, 138–40.

⁹⁰ The 1 December 2009 issue of *Business Magazine* considered that one particular assertion had marked the last two decades: “THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL: This assertion has been so often used that it deserves being personalized. Former prime-

Tăriceanu (who would rectify all the “injustices” characterizing the functioning of the government, and this would equal “the exit from *transition*”⁹¹), or Mircea Geoană (who stated that *transition* “comes to an end”⁹²).

Analytically justified, this conclusion was not easy to accept by the majority of the population and the mass media. The latter preferred to see the “empty half of the glass” and they underscored the still powerful con-

minister Victor Ciorbea invoked it alongside the reforms initiated in 1997. With time, this *light* became some sort of a “Fata Morgana,” while the post-2000 level of economic growth and the fact that transition ended imperceptibly made it look obsolete. It still has chances to become topical again in 2010, in the context of the economic crisis.”

<http://www.businessmagazin.ro/galerie-foto/cover-story/cum-arata-romania-dupa-20-de-ani-de-capitalism-5138216/slide-23> (last accessed 14. 02 .2010). On the same topic of transition, in a discussion with Octavian Andronic, Victor Ciorbea affirmed that “We could hide ourselves behind this formula of transition, since in the period of transition everything can be explained; using this term almost looks like at least a temporary panacea.” (<http://www.editura-aleg.ro/index.php?module=pagesetter&func=viewpub&tid=2&pid=15> (last accessed 14. 02. 2010).

⁹¹ “The 2004 elections have marked the end of transition. The country’s modernization will now start by the integration in the European Union and the reconstruction of well-being. [...] We are now at the borderline between a controversial transition and the relaunch of Romanian society’s modernization. [...] The second significant aspect of these elections is the fact that they have put an end to transition. The government I lead will be the first Government of post-transition Romania! [...] On the domestic level, exit from transition will mean that our government will not make compromises of the type of those made during the previous governments. [...] Transition has ended! Modernization is to follow, and this one is intrinsically linked to the European Union.” <http://www.dapnl-pd.ro/document.php?id=81> (last accessed 15. 01. 2010).

⁹² When exit-poll results were announced on 6 December 2009, and they indicated Geoană as the winner of presidential elections, he asserted: “Elections have ended. [...] Twenty years of painful transition have come to an end. Twenty years of discord, scandals, hardships and lost hopes end now. Today’s victory represents a new chapter in the history of this country. We start on a new path today. A path towards unity and prosperity. A path we have been after for the last 20 years.” <http://www.mirceageoana.ro/blog> (last accessed 14.02.2010). This speech followed other similar discourses during the electoral campaign, for instance that regarding the agreement between the Social-Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party: “I believe this moment marks the end of the post-communist transition we started during the revolution.” <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-politic-6680620-mircea-geoana-guvernul-iohannis-investit-pana-craciun-functiona-pana-2012.htm> (last accessed 14. 02. 2010). It is already well known that the official count of votes invalidated the exit-poll results and announced the victory of Traian Băsescu; in the context of the passions that were unleashed by that very close result, nobody reconsidered the idea that Mircea Geoană’s failure meant that transition had not yet ended in Romania.

trast between the Romanian society and Western models of normality. Octavian Paler synthesized this skepticism of the majority of Romanians as follows:

The “transition” story seems to be a fad embraced by all post-December governments. All of them tell it, and they tell it in different variants. They mold it as if it were some piece of plasticine, fully convinced that transition only belongs to those governing and not to us all. They decide if we are sick, or in remission, or healthy; they tell us if we should shout out loud ‘Land!’ like Columbus’ crew when they saw a shoreline on the horizon, or whether we should keep quiet. Some prime ministers have told this story in poetic language. Ciorbea saw it as a “tunnel” at whose end a “light” was burning. Others considered it a wide path, even a road, with the exception of Văcăroiu and Radu Vasile who never had theoretical concerns. From the very moment of his appointment, Tăriceanu also told us the same story. [...] I can somehow explain why Mr. Tăriceanu proclaimed the end of “transition.” As December 1989 has receded more and more distantly in time, we have seen the term becoming more and more nebulous and confusing. We use “transition” to say that we have broken away from “something” and we are heading towards “something else.” But, at a certain moment, this “something else” started to look like a Fata Morgana. Thus, whenever we thought we were getting closer to it, it would go further away or become ever more vague and unclear.⁹³

It is worthwhile noting that these assertions were made when Romania had just become a NATO member and had ended its negotiations for accession to the European Union, a situation which should have offered a stronger prospective regarding the end of transition. Following Octavian Paler’s remarks, the goal of transition was seen as being increasingly vague, as it included a complete (and utopian) resolution of all dysfunctions in the Romanian society and economy. We should not be surprised that a year after Romania’s accession to the European Union, someone still commented sarcastically on the forum of the newspaper *Adevărul* (*The Truth*): “We will be long dead by the time this transition ends.”⁹⁴ In this context, in which *transition* was seen not as a process that would lead to the establishment of concrete economic and political mechanisms, but to the creation of a socio-economic level and of the functioning of society comparable to those from Western countries, the label *transition* radically prevented any attempts at a more applied conceptualization of the term.

⁹³ *Gazeta de Sud*, 4 January 2005, <http://www2.gds.ro/print/32271> (last accessed 20. 09. 2009).

⁹⁴ Post from 18 January 2008, on <http://www.adevarul.ro/articole/cat-dureaza-doua-secole.html> (last accessed 19. 09. 2009).

Conclusions

The term *transition* imposed itself on the Romanian socio-political vocabulary of the mid-nineteenth century and has been a part of it ever since. The term was first used to designate the yet unfinished stage of Romania's modernization and its adaptation the Western model. During the debates about Romania's modernization from the first half of the twentieth century, the term *transition* acquired especially negative connotations and was less often used as compared to "revolution," "passage" and "transformation." During the communist period, *transition* gained some ground following the abstractization of the language referring to historical evolution, but the endeavors to conceptualize historical transformations did not lead to significant results in point of knowledge. Relaunched within the debates from intellectual milieus by Ștefan Cazimir's work, *Alfabetul de tranziție* (*The Alphabet of Transition*) (1986), the term *transition* became ubiquitous after 1989. Under the influence of debates centered upon the other Central and South-Eastern European states, the concept started to predominantly refer to the post-communist period. Some experts underscored that this was only a new Westernizing transition kindred to the nineteenth-century modernization.

In the public's eye, *transition* has ended as a term designating a period rather than a process, a comfortable label for the post-1989 era rather than a well-articulated concept that was meant to awaken people's conscience about the need to change inherited realities. *Transition* has amplified its negative semantics given the fact that it has reflected the miserableness of post-1990 social views—a situation that has been partially justified by many economic and social involutions, but which has also been autonomously stimulated by mass media and various political discourses. Debates have most often concentrated on identifying the happy-end moment of the "exit from transition," rather than articulating the proper characteristic features of the historical process designated by the concept of *transition*. Though not absent, conceptual preoccupations have only had a limited scope. We should however note that some well-constructed contributions to the economy and sociology of transition do exist; for instance, as we are writing this paper, a potentially innovatory study by Ovidiu Țichindeleanu is in progress, one which will focus on the culture of *transition* in the post-communist period.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, a holistic approach to

⁹⁵ Țichindeleanu, *Colonizarea postcomunistă*, accessible at <http://www.afcn.ro/uploads/Rezultatele%20sesiunii%20de%20finantare%20pentru%20Carte%202009%20dupa%20>

post-communist transition is more likely a task of the future for both Romania and the other countries from Central and South-Eastern Europe. The successful fulfillment of such projects depends upon our ability to accept the finite historical character of post-communist *transition* as well as upon the ability to distinguish between this *transition* and the much more long-lasting process of recuperating the temporal gaps between the Romanian society and the Western one.

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The History of Politics as a Dispute around the Concepts of Politics, Statesman, Political Person, Politician

Armin Heinen

The conceptual field of the term *politics* has not yet been systematically analyzed neither in the case of Romania as a whole nor in that of any of its regions. So far, the socio-linguistic studies of Klaus Bochmann and Jürgen Erfurt have contributed to distinguishing between the concepts of *politics* and *cultural transfer*, as they were used during the first half of the nineteenth century. Their reflections are supplemented by Sorin Antohi's examination of the semantic transformation of the concept of *politics* during the 1848 revolution (the religious connotations of the concept). More broadly, the investigation of *politics* in the field of the history of ideas pertains to a long tradition in the international context. In his work *Basic Historical Concepts*, Volker Sellin summarized the state of debates, and Kari Palonen spoke about the cultural traditions of *politics* in Germany and France. Other approaches, such as those of Willibald Steinmetz, focus on everyday activities and analyze semantic transformation in the processes of negotiations by using novel bibliographic sources (such as administrative documents, images, etc.).

In its online issue from 13 January 2009, the newspaper *Evenimentul Zilei* reported that Liviu Dragnea had been removed from the position of Minister of Internal Affairs because he had not consulted with the president of his own party (the Social Democratic Party) before convoking the head of the security service. He was accused of alleged rapprochement to the state's president, Traian Băsescu, and of being on friendly terms with the adversary of his party and the president's confidante, Elena Udrea. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party shortly concluded that the Minister of Internal Affairs had been working for "some-

body else” than his own party and, hence, he could no longer have the party’s support.¹

It was almost unbelievable that something similar could happen in Germany, just as it was hard to imagine that German newspapers could un-indignantly write about obedience to one’s party. While in Germany the fight for power has a bad reputation and people’s expectations are drawn towards a dispute for better ideas and a more efficient administration, in Romania politics refers to something else, which also includes “the fight” among various groups. If one was to use the modern language of political science, one could say that the term *politics* (“political process”) took center stage in Romania while *policy* (“political content and political action”) was dominant in Germany.²

As one comment from the January 2005 issue of *România literară* shows, Romania’s situation is rather controversial. Gheorghe Ceaușescu explains the difference among “statesmen,” “political persons” and “politicians” (“oameni de stat,” “oameni politici,” “politicieni”), or between various parties’ politicians and politicasters who only do politics in their own interest and without understanding the point of their activity.³ Translating the concept of *politician* by “politicaster” is unfortunate, since it only expresses the idea of chatter, irrational and idle talk without referring to one’s own interests in point of politics. The enumeration of various derivatives of the concept of *politician* and the difficulty to transpose them in German prove that the Romanian term of *politics* (*politică*) is polysemantic and controversial. It simultaneously comprises several semantics: a) in the tradition of early modernity, *politics* represents the science and practice of government; b) in the tradition of conflict theories from Karl Marx to Ralph Dahrendorf, *politics* is a fight for power and ideological supremacy; c) in Max Weber’s interpretation, *politics* is a decision-making process necessary for all social groups.⁴

The author of the above-mentioned article published in *România literară* ends by noting that Romania urgently needs statesmen. Romania has needed well-prepared, intellectually and morally honest political persons for over a hundred years: this became an urgent matter immediately after the union of the principalities and the recognition of their independence (1859–1878). In light of this, significant personalities of this time such as

¹ *Evenimentul Zilei*, online edition, last accessed 13. 01. 2009.

² See Rohe and Dörner, “Politikbegriffe,” 453–8.

³ Ceaușescu, “Oameni de stat, oameni politici, politicianiști.”

⁴ <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politică> (last accessed 16. 02. 2009).

Mihail Kogălniceanu, Ion Brătianu and Lascăr Catargiu are today celebrated as great statesmen.⁵

Basic concepts in the sense given to them by Reinhart Koselleck⁶ always carry older meanings too. It is worth noting that the term *politics* (*politică*) has had a pretty troubled history in Romania; this is why it is appropriate to dissociate at least eight phases of its evolution, each one comprising its own inner stages. Most often, the concept of *politics* (*politică*) refers to different semantic contents in Transylvania and the Old Kingdom. In conclusion, prior to 1990, scholars did not find an equivalent for *politics* (*politică*), and they were even more unsuccessful in trying to find an equivalent for political actors. As a consequence, the present-day dispute around politics is also a dispute around the meaning of the political act.

Unlike the case of Volker Sellin,⁷ who wrote a comprehensive study on the concept of *politics* in the German cultural space, and unlike Kari Palonen⁸ and Dolf Sternberger,⁹ who wrote books on the same concept, my present paper about the concept of *politics* in Romania only aims to be a preliminary presentation of the concept given the absence of any other papers on this topic. Yet, were we to refer in general to the period of transition between 1821 and 1866, we should mention the useful comprehensive studies by Klaus Bochmann,¹⁰ Jürgen Erfurt,¹¹ or the team around Michael Metzeltin.¹² These studies show that the Romanian concept of *politics* (*politică*) acquired a complex form only after the formation of the Romanian state by the union of Moldavia and Wallachia.

We must additionally select our information from existent sources. It is hard to monitor their quantity; hence in a first stage we should consult lexicons and encyclopedias. We will see that in comparison to other cultures, there have been few such works published in the Romanian linguistic space. Meanwhile, the use of newspapers and magazines is not

⁵ See Ceaușescu, "Oameni de stat, oameni politici," x.

⁶ Koselleck, "Einleitung," xiii.

⁷ Sellin, "Politik," 789–874.

⁸ Palonen, *Politik als Handlungsbegriff*. Palonen, *Die Thematisierung der Politik als Phänomen*; Palonen, *Das Webersche Moment*; Palonen, *The Struggle with Time*.

⁹ Sternberger, *Drei Wurzeln der Politik*.

¹⁰ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*.

¹¹ Erfurt, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz im Rumänischen um die Zeit der Vereinigung der Fürstentümer Moldau und Walachei*.

¹² Metzeltin, Lindenbauer, and Wochele, *Die Entwicklung des Zivilisationswortschatzes im südosteuropäischen Raum im 19. Jahrhundert*.

recommended for a preliminary study, nor is it recommended to thoroughly investigate “political-theoretical” monographs. It would be useful, though, to analyze the most recent bibliographic editions regarding the way history is taught in universities¹³ and to use the internet as a resource, since the virtual space offers access to the current language. The dispute over an accurate understanding of the concept of *politics* has an echo in the digital world. Online library catalogs available to a wide audience permit one to sort the bibliographic materials according to their year of publication. And even though this online process of cataloging information has not yet ended in Romania, it makes possible the investigation of public discourse.¹⁴ Additionally, the internet allows one to comfortably read numerous basic texts such as Titu Maiorescu’s article “The New Direction of Romanian Poetry and Prose” from *Convorbiri Literare* (*Literary Dialogues*), or works by Mihai Eminescu and I.L. Caragiale.¹⁵

State-of-the-art studies of approaches to *politics* are inadequate,¹⁶ especially because the meaning of *politics* was thematized only late in Romania, despite the fact that the term had started to be used long before. In this sense, my study would benefit from “the history of lexicon usage,”¹⁷ even though circumstances cannot always be explained.¹⁸ This is a history of the disputes around words or, put differently, a conceptual history of politics in the real meaning of the term.

While in the West, the concept of *politics* has had a long tradition as a science of the just order of the polis, in Aristotle’s sense, or as a technique

¹³ Scurtu, *România*; Scurtu, Mocanu, and Smârcea, *Documente privind istoria României între anii 1918–1944*; Hurezeanu and Sbârână, *Partide și curente politice în România*; Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*; Sbârână, *Partidele politice din România*; Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs in Rumänien*, etc.

¹⁴ The Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest (<http://www.biblacad.ro/>) offers three different online catalogues to its users: a catalogue of old Romanian books published until 1830 (ORB), a contemporary Romanian bibliography for the period between 1919 and 1952, and the largest catalogue made up of some 80,000 books (RAL) and older newspapers, albeit they have been predominantly published after 1996. Meanwhile, the use of the online catalogues from Bucharest’s Central University Library is useful since it offers catalogues spanning all the above-mentioned periods of time.

¹⁵ A comprehensive number of such sources can be found at: <http://ro.wikisource.org>.

¹⁶ Palonen, *Politik als Handlungsbegriff*, 11.

¹⁷ Steinmetz, “Neue Wege einer historischen Semantik des Politischen,” 11–13.

¹⁸ Fritz, *Einführung in die historische Semantik*. On the history of the Romanian language from the perspective of comparative studies, see the three-volume work: Ernst, Gleßgen, Schmitt, and Schweickard, *Romanische Sprachgeschichte*.

of acquiring and maintaining state power, in Machiavelli's view, in the Romanian culture this concept represented a novelty at the end of the eighteenth century. Today's "suffering" from "politics" in Romania, or the country's "sulkiness about politics," is the product of a historical process that has associated the concept of *politics* with the idea of the *nation* and not with that of legitimizing power and limiting it by public debate as a compromise among interests that leads to the establishment of a conflict-free order.

From Label-Politics to the Politics of Public Order Motivated by Natural Rights (1700–1828)

A first source of information regarding the concept of *politics* in the 1750s is *The Dictionary of the Romanian Language*. It informs us that *politics* used to be employed in Romanian in the sense of "ceremony" or "label." Thus, a quote reads that "Politics demands it too, we need to head towards him and greet him."¹⁹ A more modern meaning of the concept of *politics* also entered the Romanian vocabulary during the Enlightenment period. In fact, the means of cultural transfer were different from one region to another. Ambrosius Marlianus' *The Prince's Mirror* reached Moldavia and Wallachia by means of the Greek language.²⁰ Dimitrie Țichindeal, a priest and scholar from Banat, transposed the Serbian Enlightenment literature in Romanian and spread its philosophical and political teachings via fables.²¹ Ion Budai-Deleanu kept the old meaning of the concept,²² and Samuil Micu titled his translation from Christian Baumeister's works, *Despre legile firii, eticii și politicii* (*On the Laws of Nature, Ethics and Politics*)²³. Even though Ionică Tăutu tried to strengthen the reign of small boyars from Moldavia, he discussed *politics* by means of the idea of natural rights, under the influence of Enlightenment ideas. As a consequence, before the arrival of Western influences in the Romanian economic, so-

¹⁹ Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, *Dicționarul Limbii Române* (DLR), volume 8, part 4, 983, s.v. politic, -ă (n.v. politics).

²⁰ This fact is proved by the ORB catalogue of the Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest: Marlianus, *Theatron politikon*.

²¹ Țichindeal, *Filozoficești și politicești prin fabule moralnice învățături*.

²² Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*, 38. On I. Budai-Deleanu, see Neumann, "Exegeza trecutului ca militantism politic," 345–62.

²³ Micu, *Legile firei, itica și politica sau Filosofia cea lucrătoare*.

cial, and cultural life, the concept of *politics* remained vague and undetermined, and it was only rarely used. Yet, it acquired nuances that referred to its relation to public order.

The National-Religious Codification of Politics from Wallachia and Moldavia and the Plea for Co-Decision in Transylvania (1828–1866/67)

In his essay from this volume, Klaus Bochmann mentions five references pertaining to the Romanian socio-political language from 1821 to 1850. Provided that we also take into consideration Romanian adjectives like “politic” and “politicesc” (“political” and “pertaining to politics”), we notice that the number of used terms related to politics did not rise significantly during the above-mentioned period.²⁴ Meanwhile, a semantic deviation occurred which marked the becoming of the concept of *politics* in Romania. In 1848, Wallachian revolutionaries associated political language to the model provided by religious redemption, the only type of vocabulary understood by people living in villages.²⁵ The languages of the new era became possible only by placing them in relation to the rhetorics and rituals of Christ’s Resurrection and with the idea of leading a life of truth. In my view, Sorin Antohi’s analysis in this respect is extremely relevant and edifying.²⁶ He pointed out how church and religion established the life of the many, while God and the priests marked the relevant events for the life of the village. Later, the teacher would also be added to this equation. In this concrete, “face-to-face” world, outside troubles were almost impossible to differentiate and one could not distinguish among economy, politics and religion. Language had to heed this aspect too. Thus, in German-language territories, the secularization and particularization of the concept of *politics* occurred through a future-oriented interpretation of the social order, by the use of *revolution* instead of *revolutions*, of *history* instead of *histories* or of *freedom* instead of *freedoms*.²⁷ As far as the Romanian-language area is concerned, there occurred an overlap-

²⁴ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*, index.

²⁵ An eloquent text in this sense is *The Islaz Proclamation*; see Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 13–38.

²⁶ Antohi, *Civitas Imaginalis*, 30–2, 98–101.

²⁷ See Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 63.

ping of lexemes from French and Latin upon an old religious substratum of Slavic origin. Under the circumstances, the concept of *revolution* (understood as *politics*) became a religious celebration of unity and collectivity. At the same time, the concept of *party* lost its sense of scission because, whenever they talked about themselves, revolutionaries would talk about “the National Party.”²⁸ Meanwhile, Romanian exiles from France militated for the union of the principalities and talked about “political faith” or a “political religion.”²⁹ They wanted a foreign prince for their future state because the past rivalry between those who claimed the country’s throne had generated corruption and abuse.³⁰ In other words, in the Romanian case, the term *politică* did not refer to *politics*: it was a concept that primarily referred to the *nation* and which meant *the political line* of national agitators (Nicolae Bălcescu).³¹

Politics was closely tied to the religious world in Wallachia. In Transylvania, the adjective *political* acquired the meaning of *public*. Thus, in 1847, Sava Popovici wrote a book whose title promised to explain to its readers how to write a private or a public (*political*) letter.³² In a manifesto from 24 March 1848, Simion Bărnuțiu declared that Romanians had been politically dead until then.³³ The Blaj petition asked for equal rights with the other “nations” and for “national independence in the political respect” so that “the Romanian nation” could send a number of representatives in parliament that would reflect their overall proportion within the rest of the population.³⁴

Put differently, Transylvanian revolutionaries did not want truth or eternal redemption; they simply wanted the right to participate in the political life of their region. In 1860, Teodor Păcățian published his “golden book” about national political fights under the Hungarian Crown.³⁵ Thus, during the Enlightenment, Transylvania’s inhabitants participated more

²⁸ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*, 139.

²⁹ Erfurt, 75.

³⁰ See “The Project of Bucharest’s Central Committee for Union,” 30.3.1857, in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 203.

³¹ Bochmann, *Der politisch-soziale Wortschatz des Rumänischen von 1821 bis 1850*, 160.

³² Popovici, *Epistolar sau Carte de învățătură pentru deprinderea în corespondințe*.

³³ “Manifestul lui Simion Bărnuțiu” [Simion Bărnuțiu’s manifesto], 24–25. 03. 1848, in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 189.

³⁴ “Petițiunea națională adoptată la Blaj” [National petition adopted by the Romanian National Assembly in Blaj], (3–5. 05. 1848), in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 191.

³⁵ Păcățian, *Cartea de aur sau Luptele politice naționale ale românilor de sub Coroana ungară*, 186.

intensely in the public life of the region than those who lived to the South or East of the Carpathian Mountains. The border between Romanian regions led to the formation of an elite class that trusted its own power. The co-existence of several religions in Transylvania prevented the association between politics and religion or the formulation of politics by means of a religious language in this area.³⁶

Thus, the concept of *politics* had a different meaning in pre-1914 Transylvania than in the Old Kingdom. Here, *politics* referred to people's plea to participate in the field of power as well as to their plea to limit the boundaries of power; this happened as a result of the fact that Romanians continued to be disadvantaged after the 1867 Austro-Hungarian compromise.³⁷ In 1894, memorandists concluded that the Hungarian people had not reached supremacy by means of "political prudence" or any other features that would have allowed them to regulate "common affairs," but they had evolved alongside the other groups. The idea of political practice did not yet exist in Transylvania, and this stimulated the Romanian National Party's aspiration to the autonomy of Transylvania. The concept of *politics* meant order, or a political condition, and this was actually the explanation associated to the term by Cornelius Diaconovich in *The Romanian Encyclopedia*. In this work, *politics* referred to the totality of rules that determine the attitude of governments towards their subjects. Other authors, however, also attributed different meanings to the concept, namely power, science and art.³⁸ All in all, the absence of an entry for "politicianism" in the dictionary was not surprising given the above-mentioned conditions and the impossibility of doing independent politics.

The goal had been and continued to be the necessity to co-decide in point of "common matters," and the "passivism" prior to 1905 had not made possible concrete-offensive political actions. When in the same year, the Romanian National Party gave up its political abstinence and participated in elections from regions where the majority of the population were Romanian, *politică* referred to its decision to "enter parliamentary activity," and not the decision to enter *politics*. The party did not only aim for Transylvania's autonomy but also for it taking up the administration of all the regions where the majority of the population was Romanian.³⁹

³⁶ Victor Neumann underscored this idea in a comment referring to my own paper. Also see Neumann, "Orient și Occident."

³⁷ For the history of Transylvania, see Maior, "Transilvania," 293–355.

³⁸ Diaconovich, *Enciclopedia Română*, vol. 3, 632.

³⁹ Hitchins, *Rumania*, 217.

Vasile Goldiș, for instance, was in favor of political fights whose goal was not that of acquiring influence or power, but that of consolidating the national consciousness.⁴⁰ Additionally, for the young Octavian Goga, the fight for national emancipation would spring from the ideas of classical nationalism, and he made the distinction between “our political orientation” and Hungarian politicianism. For him, the most important phrases were “national re-awakening” and “the feeling of spiritual unity,”⁴¹ phrases that were also heard in the Old Kingdom of Romania.

Claiming Weltanschauung and Political Pragmatics. The Linguistic Description of Suffering – 1866–1900

The union of the Romanian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia could have happened even in the absence of “a divine miracle”! “Faith in the nation’s rebirth” did not really help the unionists. Their superiority resided in forming networks as well as in their penchant to leave aside all controversial social problems. They therefore had political skills, and this influenced the development of future events. The liberals and conservatives removed Alexandru Ioan Cuza from power because of his belief that he could decree modernization.⁴² This was followed by the new constitution of 1866 and the electoral law from the same year.⁴³ Both documents contained conservative features as well as liberal aspects, since only these could limit the prince’s arbitrary actions. The conservatives, however, forgot that they themselves had significantly contributed to enacting the new order. *Politics* remained an affair in the hands of the few because voting rights favored the rich and disadvantaged the poor. In Romania, this regulation favored the boyars and not the bourgeoisie, as it had happened in the West. Boyars were “innate” politicians whether they were older and conservative or younger and liberal. When they returned to villages, peasants would call them

⁴⁰ Goldiș, “O părere individuală” [A personal opinion], in *Românul*, 30. 01. 1911, reprinted in Hurezeanu and Sbârnă, *Partide și curente politice*, 302–4.

⁴¹ Goga, “Izolarea noastră.” (Reprinted in Hurezeanu and Sbârnă, *Partide și curente politice*, 306–8.)

⁴² Hitchens, *Românii*, 355–87.

⁴³ A general overview of Romania’s constitutional and political history between 1866 and 1938 can be found in Scurtu and Bulei, *Democrația la români*, and Focșeneanu, *Istoria constituțională a României*.

“lords.” This is how they also perceived themselves, and their starting premise was that the state was their property.⁴⁴

The government decided what the results of elections would be on the basis of the electoral promises given to the circle of the important few who had a right to vote and following the direct interventions of the administration. Thus, if necessary, the prince had the right to change governments or to give in to pressures from the street or the press. All cabinets followed a more or less forced pragmatic politics of modernization. This was attentively sanctioned by the head of state. Neither the governing party nor the opposition could actively participate in the parliament’s lot. In principle, parliament orators exchanged conservative or liberal views among themselves, and both parties used great words to refer to the transcendent nation, or they used great words in the name of the transcendent nation. The fact that Romania’s foreign politics had to especially represent the kingdom’s interests was deeply disappointing. National rhetoric and action properly speaking were in contradiction to one another.

Titu Maiorescu’s critique of “forms without substance” had already been present in the case of Dionisie Pop Marțian, whose conservative interpretation of history became known in the 1870s:

We have merely learned how to live elegantly; we have exclusively taken care of party politics, and our educational system has not produced anything useful except for a legion of lawyers.⁴⁵

The poet and political pamphleteer Mihai Eminescu made a caricature of the Romanian “statesman” in writing: he “will promise many things, / So never show you have no faith / Thank him, though, by humble bows.”⁴⁶ The playwright I.L. Caragiale, the author of many satirical plays that caricaturized urban politics with the alleged pompousness of the small bourgeoisie, considered C.A. Rosetti as the most competent Romanian in point of political fights. His critique of conservatives was deemed to have a real basis. Different from what political dilettantes believed, the dispute between the conservatives and the liberals was not an authentic fight for power, but a fight for seriousness, on the one hand, and doing business by political middlemen, on the other. I.L. Caragiale placed I.C. Brătianu and C.A. Rosetti in the latter category.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ It has been particularly Victor Neumann who drew my attention to this issue. See also his study, “Orient și Occident.”

⁴⁵ Pop-Marțian, “Cauza principală a neputințelor noastre economice și sociale.”

⁴⁶ Eminescu, “Un om de stat.”

⁴⁷ Caragiale, “Liberalii și conservatorii.”

The Conservative Party members also copied the gist of their political program from their “spiritual counterparts” in the West. Their program opposed “the idea of the historical evolution of national individuality” to the liberals’ “beneficial abstractions,” and “the idea of Romanian nationality” to that of alleged universality.⁴⁸ These were great words, but they had almost nothing in common with *politics* in the Western meaning of the concept, since we can notice the conservatives’ refusal of an electoral reform and their nostalgia for past times when there used to be boyars, free peasants, city dwellers, indentured peasants, but no “parties.”⁴⁹

For the liberals, “freedom was not a holy right that could be fulfilled, or a right of everyone perceived as such by each and every one.” In fact, they considered themselves to be wise politicians and lawmakers who stimulated the modernization of the country and its economy by their interventions at the state level. Their interest was not vested in gaining protection for the state or in negating the “aristocratic police state,” to use Robert Mohl’s formulation; instead, they saw the state as a means towards economic renewal.

Politics seldom appears as a noun in bibliographic sources. In its adjectival form, the concept designated the sphere of politics. Many newspapers would explain what they wanted to thematize by means of an extra title. Such was the case, for instance, of “the political, economic, literary and scientific newspaper” that called itself *The Public’s Welfare* (*Binele public*), a precursor of *Timpul* (*Time*).⁵⁰ As the liberal M.P. Nicolae Xenopol noted, political actors were called “statesmen” (a conservative ideal) who prescribed to sick nations the remedy they needed.⁵¹ There were “politicians” and “lawmakers,” and there were also those who knew the art of political fights. For these latter no name was adequate. Yet, since I.L. Caragiale spoke of people with competences “in point of political fights,” whom he called “political middlemen” and “political dilettantes,” it is clear that some effort for conceptual clarification existed. People continuously talked about party politics or “ideas” about freedom,

⁴⁸ “Programul Partidului Conservator, 1880,” in Hurezeanu and Sbârână, *Partide și curente politice*, 204–9, particularly 208.

⁴⁹ Caragiale, “Liberalii și conservatorii,” x.

⁵⁰ One search in the online catalogue from Bucharest’s Central University Library indicates 300 entries for the term *politic* (*political*) between 1700 and 1914.

⁵¹ “Deputat liberal Nicolae Xenopol despre asemănările și deosebirile dintre liberali și conservatori. Discurs în Adunarea Deputaților, 9.12.1897” [The Liberal M.P. Nicolae Xenopol on the Similarities and Differences between Liberals and Conservatives. Speech to the M.P.s Assembly], in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 220.

organic development, or the place of the nation. The first decades of the new Romanian state were therefore marked by a strange contradiction between pragmatic politics and the ideologization of language. The conservatives and the liberals had managed to concentrate the social forces around their slogans.

The Critique of Politics as “Science.” The Generational Gap and Social Differentiation (1900–1914/1918)

A generational gap occurred before World War I. Prior to that time, writers had established their discourse and left their marks on it. The novelty consisted in the influence of scientists, historians (such as Nicolae Iorga), sociologists (such as Dobrogeanu-Gherea and Constantin Stere), psychologists, and philosophers (such as Rădulescu-Motru). They were open to Western ideas, to the criticism of civilization, to debating revisionism and peoples’ psychology, and they turned against the past generation, which they worshiped but also accused of naiveté, the absence of methodological exactness, and the practice of a critique that brought no results. For the first time, they focused on social conditions, especially those of peasants but also those of city dwellers. They considered that the nation would remain incomplete if it failed to integrate the masses. According to the political left, also including the liberals, this could only be achieved by agrarian and voting rights reforms. For the political right running the gambit from conservatives to nationalists, such reforms required a rigorous preparation.⁵²

Nobody could contest the fact that society was on the move. New social categories progressed and entered politics. Parties no longer represented univocal class interests but they reflected convictions and offered an interesting platform for politicians by profession. Successful people like George Panu and Take Ionescu left the liberal party for the conservatives and thereby strengthened the impression that everything was in continuous flow. The country was passing through a deep economic and political crisis. During eight years, five liberal and conservative governments succeeded one another in Romania.⁵³ While expressions like “to politicize” and “politician by profession” entered the vocabulary of the German

⁵² On the political atmosphere of Romania around 1900, see Bulei, *Lumea românească la 1900*; Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România*.

⁵³ Hitchins, *Rumania, 1866–1947*, 108–12.

language rather late, public opinion from France hurried to criticize *politics*. In the German Empire, the executive power was linked to the Kaiser, and *politics* still referred to something glorious and useful for the state.⁵⁴

Undoubtedly, the liberals' orientation towards Prussia was a case of "Realpolitik" (Rochau, 1853), a case of a clear politics of interests. In the eyes of its contemporaries, though, it served the whole. Thus, Max Weber's ponderings on the profession of the politician also included the idea of having the vocation of a politician.⁵⁵ Unlike "great politics," the verb "to politicize" did not only refer to loquacity but also to the positive politicization of society.⁵⁶ The Third French Republic perceived its parliamentary system in completely different terms. The evolution of the new social categories, the imminent removal from power of high rank citizens, and the success of some politicians by profession propagated a sarcastic critique of political ferment. People saw the *politiciens* as those who practiced politics only in view of developing their own career and fulfilling their personal interests.⁵⁷ It took time before the concept also reached Romania. Here it had tremendous success, as one rarely found anywhere else. This was so because in comparison to the French administration, which served the public good and functioned on the basis of clear-cut performance criteria, the Romanian administration had no bureaucratic traditions and was thus exposed to political influences.⁵⁸

In 1904, Constantin Rădulescu-Motru published a book that seemed to summarize the entire situation, namely *Cultura română și politicianismul* (*Romanian Culture and Politicianism*). This work represented the first social and scientific analysis of Romanian *politicianism*.⁵⁹ By *politicianism*, Rădulescu-Motru understood the following:

[...] some type of political activity or, better said, an artful practice of political rights by which a few citizens of a state attempt and sometimes manage to trans-

⁵⁴ Palonen, *Politik als Handlungsbegriff*, 57 sq.; Zimmermann, Wagemann, and Sprick, "Von edlen Staatsmännern und eitlen Kannengießern," 161.

⁵⁵ Palonen, *Politik als Handlungsbegriff*, 51.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁵⁷ Zimmermann, Wagemann, and Sprick, "Von edlen Staatsmännern," 144–51.

⁵⁸ This aspect regarding the absence of a culture of public welfare was also highlighted by Victor Neumann in "Orient și Occident: ambivalențele culturii române." On the difference between the Romanian and French concepts of nation, see Neumann, *Neam, Popor sau Națiune?*, 13–45, 85–116. On the tradition of the French administration, see Heinen, "Les cabinets," 117–26.

⁵⁹ Rădulescu-Motru, *Scrieri politice*, 63–183. For the analysis of Rădulescu-Motru's text, see Heinen, *Die Legion "Erzengel Michael" in Rumänien*, 74.

form institutions and public services from means of achieving the public welfare, as they should be, to means of achieving personal interests.⁶⁰

In principle, Rădulescu-Motru followed the path suggested by Titu Maiorescu, the difference lying in the fact that he diagnosed the issue of “the Romanian culture’s disequilibrium” as a “social” disease. The “cure” he proposed included the post-World War I young generation’s vocation for politics; the opposition to parasite politicianism; the relation between Romanianness and Orthodoxy; the people’s feelings for their leader. He also referred to great property, a situation that was to change after 1918.

Like other intellectuals, Rădulescu-Motru believed in the benefits of an authoritarian style. In 1913, Eugenia de Reuss-Inculescu delivered a speech entitled “Romanian Women and Politics” in which she underscored the idea that habits would become better and individuals more powerful once women entered politics.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the liberal leader Ion I.C. Brătianu loudly claimed in front of his party colleagues that “For politicians like you and me the only issue at hand is to know when the right time has come for carrying out this reform [the agrarian and vote reform, n.n.].”⁶²

Action-Politics. Mass Democracy and the Demand for a Charismatic Leader (1918–1944)

Prior to 1914, the liberals’ agenda included the fundamental reform of the Romanian society, but the end of World War I brought about a change of priorities.⁶³ After the war, the country became unrecognizable for outsiders because of the union that had occurred in the interim. Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania and Banat were now part of Romania. This looked better than in the most daring dreams from before the war, and also asked for the need to solve the external process involved in the nation’s formation. Romanian peasants profited from the most radical agrarian reform in the entire South-Eastern European region. Under the new cir-

⁶⁰ Rădulescu-Motru, *Scrisori politice*, 65.

⁶¹ De Reuss-Inculescu, “Femeia română și politica,” 141.

⁶² Brătianu, “Discurs la Congresul Partidului Național Liberal din 1913” [Speech within the Congress of the National Liberal Party, 1913], in *Viitorul* 22. 10. 1913, quoted in Hurezeanu and Sbârnea, *Partide și curente politice*, 194.

⁶³ See Heinen, *Die Legion “Erzengel Michael,”* 40, Maner, *Parlamentarismus in Rumänien*.

cumstances, they could vote without restraints. Revolutionary demands and everyday experiences, however, were in stark contradistinction. The area of land that peasants could cultivate was not enough to ensure decent living standards. Elections continued to be “rigged,” as in the past. Corruption remained an ever-present calamity. Many political upstarts moved from one party to another at their whim.

Politics meant *political practice*. Although they no longer mattered, even conservatives spoke about political fights.⁶⁴ Once again one could notice a change of perspective brought about by World War I. Following the fascist model, the Electoral Law of 1926 would offer a reward to the most powerful group in case it obtained over 40 percent of people’s votes.⁶⁵ In this way, at least 70 percent of the total number of parliament positions was held by the government, which could unilaterally decree or dispose of anything without heeding the opposition. If their adversaries wanted to make themselves heard, they had no other possibility but to mobilize the press and bring politics into the street. The electoral law also became necessary, because the “government’s trousseau” was continuously dwindling, and the administration could no longer manipulate “poll results” at will. In actual fact, the orientation towards democracy would lead to a crisis of expectations and would reveal people’s aspirations for a different kind of politics. Between 1918 and 1947, people continuously talked about a new era. The conservatives exited the political fight while numerous other parties entered the political scene. When the Peasants’ Party and the older National Party from Transylvania fused together in 1926, it appeared that renewal and pragmatic politics would be possible in the future. Yet, the death of King Ferdinand and the great economic crisis destroyed such hopes.

Browsing the bibliography of the online catalogue of the Romanian Academy Library, it becomes clear that the concept of *politics* was predominantly used as a noun after 1918. Thus, we learn about the existence of an *economic politics* and a *financial politics*, an *industrial politics* and an *agrarian politics*, a *customs politics* and a *cultural politics*, or an adequate *investment politics* that would be carried out by the savings bank.⁶⁶ Aurel Candreas and Gheorghe Adamescu’s lexicon reveals the semantic

⁶⁴ “Manifestul Partidului Conservator-Progresist” [Manifesto of the Conservative-Progressivist Party], 03. 12. 1918, in Scurtu, *Documente privind istoria României*, 255.

⁶⁵ Scurtu, Alexandrescu, Bulei, and Mamina, *Enciclopedia de istorie a României*, 57.

⁶⁶ Searching for “politică?” in the BIB database of the Romanian Academy Library, Bucharest (<http://aleph500.biblacad.ro: 8991/F>) (last accessed 08. 03. 2008).

enrichment of the concept of *politics*. According to the two authors, *politics* refers to: a) an art of the state; b) knowing how to implement a fair government; c) the political process; d) a skillful way to act in order to reach one's goals. The term *politician* is also mentioned: it refers to that person who puts into practice a false, unhealthy politics and who does not act in the public interest but only in his own personal interest and by merely following his party's goals.⁶⁷ In brief, during this time, *politics* referred to something that was simultaneously valuable and repugnant, it meant both actions and events, and it made reference to the art of knowing how to act but also to the strictly rational knowledge of the political order.

The cleavages within the political system moved in the direction of extremes during the 1930s and 1940s. They separated the political spectrum into a pragmatic state-oriented *Realpolitik* and a utopian renewal carried out by a leader's great personality.⁶⁸

Given all this, *politics* acquired three very different meanings:

- *politics* was perceived as standing for order, for a clear separation between society and the state—this was the characteristic feature of Nicolae Iorga's government,⁶⁹ of the 1933 liberal government,⁷⁰ and a motivation for the royal dictatorship from 1938;
- *politics* was perceived as the will towards social renewal—this was the main interest of the National Peasant Party and was formulated as such in the party's program drafted by Ion Mihalache in 1935;⁷¹
- *politics* was perceived as non-politics or, better said, as a charismatic unity between politics and society: as such, it triggered the

⁶⁷ Candrea and Adamescu, *Dicționarul enciclopedic ilustrat "Cartea Românească"*, 968.

⁶⁸ Șerban Stelu orders the political spectrum in the direction of pragmatism or utopian thinking. I believe that it would be better to start from a tridimensional system: traditional governmental support—social framing—protest, and this differentiation overlaps in fact with Șerban's lucid electoral analysis. See Stelu, *Elite, partide și spectru politic în România interbelică*.

⁶⁹ Iorga, *Cuvântări ținute în centrele țării la luarea în primire a guvernului* [Speeches held throughout the country on being appointed Prime-Minister], in Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 108–30.

⁷⁰ "Programul de guvernare al Partidului Național-Liberal, 3 decembrie 1933," 399–403. In Scurtu et al., *Documente privind istoria României*, 399–403.

⁷¹ "Moțiunea adoptată la Congresul Partidului Național-Țărănesc din 22–23 aprilie 1935" [Motion adopted by the Congress of the National Peasant Party on 22–23 April 1935], in Sbârna, *Partidele politice din România*, 165–71.

birth of the Legion of Archangel Michael⁷² and, to a certain degree, of the movement led by Ion Antonescu.⁷³ The leader of the legionaries, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, despised “the politicized world” and the world of those who did politics⁷⁴; his confidant, Ion Moța, asked the new generation not to make politics “because we don’t do politics either, at least not in the sense in which it is understood today.”⁷⁵ Since *politics* was a polysemantic concept, they made a radical differentiation that favored the charismatic governing of the nation.

Despite the numerous political approaches between 1918 and 1944, one essential aspect was missing: the existence of esteem for the limitation of power or the possibility to understand the chances of compromise. In reality, in Romania *politics* meant the imposition of one’s will, the idea of absolute governing until the people would revolt by going into the streets or until the king would intervene; in contrast, *compromise* meant the gathering of ideas, it reconciled groups and brought back hopes.

Social Mobilization and the Politics of the Technocrat Administration during the Communist Period (1944/1947–1989)

When communists came to power under the auspices of USSR (1944–1947), traditional parties not only lacked the support of Western powers, but also the capacity to legitimate their claims. They could only oppose their will to *politics*, understood as an aspiration for power and the control of the masses, to *politics*, understood as a means to dominate street life. General Nicolae Rădescu, who was the king’s right-hand man, was appointed prime minister in February 1945 and he opposed the old slogans that had undermined the interwar parliamentary system. In the absence of principles external to the sphere of power, he had no other chance but to fail in his endeavor.⁷⁶

⁷² Heinen, *Die Legion “Erzengel Michael,”* x.

⁷³ For an analysis of Antonescu’s varying positionings throughout time, see Heinen, *Rumänien, der Holocaust und die Logik der Gewalt*.

⁷⁴ “Chemare către purtătorii duhului nou al vremii” [A plea to the bearers of the times’ new spirit] (1930), in Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 77–88.

⁷⁵ Moța, *Cranii de lemn*, 187.

⁷⁶ See Heinen, “Überwältigung – Verstrickung – Sprachlosigkeit,” 77–90.

In 1948, *politics* meant class struggle, the isolation of civic forces,⁷⁷ the offensive against the urban bourgeoisie and the brutal persecution of inside traitors. *Politics* was done by the political leaders and it represented the future, being marked by phrases like “democratic/democratică,” “lupta de clasă/luptătoare de clasă,” “reacționar/reacționară” etc. (“democratic,” “class struggle/class struggling,” “reactionary” etc.). It was attributed to party “politics,”⁷⁸ and as a noun-concept it was conceived as standing for “the great politics serving the working people.” *The Dictionary of the Modern Romanian Language* from 1958 showed that *politics* was an activity carried out by power organs and state leaders in the areas of domestic and foreign public affairs; in other words, it was the attitude and activity characterizing a person and a party. “To do politics” meant to actively participate in Romania’s political life.⁷⁹

Once the socialist state was established and class struggle “proclaimed its victory,” the synonymy between *politics* and *class struggle* no longer made sense. Politics needed to be legitimated differently. *The Romanian Encyclopedic Dictionary* from 1965 defined *politics* as “a socially-determined activity of people in their fight for power, one which reflected class hierarchies or the rapports among the various social groups.”⁸⁰ This first definition followed the old model. Yet, a second definition of *politics* further contained new pieces of information. One could thus read: “The level of justice of any politics depends upon the degree to which it expresses the vital interest of the working masses.” The text continued: “The political activity of communist and workers’ parties expresses the vital interests of the working class and of their allies because it is based on the only scientific political ideology that exists, that of scientific socialism.” In this sense, *politics* meant scientific exegesis and the need to rationally and apolitically relate the future to the interests of the working people; it did not refer to class struggle, to the domination by one single person, or to the democracy of the many. *Politics* had been depoliticized; it had been deprived of its power to take collective decisions, and this new direction was given by people who very well knew the meaning of Marxist-Leninist sciences.

⁷⁷ “Raportul lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej la plenara C.C. al P.M.R. din 3-5 martie 1949” [Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s report to the plenary of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party from Romania, 3–5 March 1949], in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 378.

⁷⁸ See the governmental program of the National Democratic Front, 29.1.1945, in Scurtu, *România*, 93.

⁷⁹ Academy of the Romanian Popular Republic, *Dicționarul limbii române moderne*, s.v. *politică* (n.v. *politics*).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 810.

The Political Dictionary from 1975 also described *politics* in keeping with the two definitions above, as (a) the state-run activity of classes, social groups or parties, and (b) the leading of society which would be strictly oriented in relation to objective laws of development. Both definitions were in contradiction with “politicianism,” with the immoral and demagogical attitude of members of government and parliament from capitalist states, or with the activity of representatives of the former political parties from Romania.⁸¹ A careful reading of the text from the *Political Dictionary* also reveals a third dimension of the concept of *politics*: (c) that of dynamizing social life.

Like many other states, at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, Romania reached the limits of the Fordist industrialization model. There could be no quantitative increase without a qualitative increase. Central and East-European states reacted to the crisis by the development of a second economy, the pluralization of their cultural and political actors, but also by their opening towards the global market. They reduced party members’ freedom of action, they increased the relevance of institutions, and they allowed the development of semi-autonomous social forces. In exchange, they obtained technologies from the West so that they could at least partially satisfy the material needs of the population. Nicolae Ceaușescu could not agree with such a system of development. His reaction to the crisis was to transfer the charisma that should have characterized the party to the government. It was no longer the party that ensured the opportunity of taking one decision or another but the charisma of Nicolae Ceaușescu and, from the 1970s onwards, his charisma alongside that of his wife, Elena Ceaușescu.⁸² Mass media celebrated the couple as being the people’s chosen ones, its protectors against foreign Soviet and Hungarian claims, and the architects of an ever greater and more beautiful country. The system’s crisis was to be overcome by mobilizing people’s intellects and by the political ardor taken up by each and every one. As a bright model, Nicolae Ceaușescu stood in the position of a leader of the Romanian people:

A whole country, a whole people and an entire party have put their feelings, thoughts, ideals and hopes for a better future upon the shoulders of a single man we cherish from the bottom of our hearts, and so they have created a one-word poem which reads: Ceaușescu.⁸³

⁸¹ Academy Ștefan Gheorghiu, *Dicționar politic, s.v. politică și politicianism* (v.n. *politics and politicianism*).

⁸² Baga and Tatur, “Rumäniens Sonderweg in Mitteleuropa,” 114–35, particularly 122.

⁸³ “Cultul personalității din jurul lui Ceaușescu,” 510–16, particularly 512.

This kind of discourse reminded its contemporaries of older eulogies which equally epitomized a living Byzantine tradition. In this atmosphere, a part of the intellectual elite that could not bear so much superficiality were trying to leave the country.⁸⁴ When, at the end of the 1970s, the *politics* of austerity needed a new change, the solution consisted in the relation that was to be established between science and politics, between taking a rational decision and resorting to supernatural inspiration. Ceaușescu was the embodiment of greatness, peace, national self-determination, and the remodeling of cities, while science indicated what exactly was good for the people, what kind of food they should eat, which room temperatures would fortify their health, etc. Below is how all this sounded in the party's own words:

After debating the program for the scientific nutrition of the people, one that was elaborated under the directives and direct leadership of comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu, secretary general of the Romanian Communist Party and president of the Socialist Republic of Romania, the Great National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Romania has found that the above-mentioned program and the decisions therein are in harmony with the general politics of our party and state whose supreme goal is to satisfy the material and spiritual welfare of the people.⁸⁵

In a nutshell, one could say that until the end of the 1980s *politics* in Romania meant “leading,” the art of government and/or the science of governing, issues that left no room for interpreting power. The dissidence legitimized itself by an ever more acute criticism to the ever decreasing charisma of Ceaușescu. Yet, it did not manage to identify alternatives to the concept of *politics* within the Romanian political tradition, where politics was seen as a term designating action.

Politics – The Dispute for Legitimizing Collective Decisions: The Dependence on Directions and *Entangled Histories* (1989–2009)

The revolution in December 1989 staged a new beginning understood as radical discontinuity and kept the logic of the wooden language that was already known from Ceaușescu. “Lady and gentleman citizen,” cried the revolutionaries to one another, and they referred to themselves as citizens

⁸⁴ I am grateful to Victor Neumann who drew my attention to this issue.

⁸⁵ “Programul de alimentație rațională a populației” [The program for the rational nutrition of the people], 29.6.1984, in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 391.

and not comrades of one and the same state. The French Revolution in its Jacobin, “totalitarian” variant, replaced the Bolshevik Revolution as the model to be followed. Yet, the new “Committee of Public Security” proved to be little inventive in comparison to the 1789 revolution, and decreed changes by means of worn-out, obsolete images that were unanimously proclaimed in the name of the entire people by means of nouns that had false revolutionary pathos.⁸⁶ The revolutionary goals were those of “abandoning the leading role of one single party and establishing a democratic, pluralist system of government,” and the aspiration of the “National Salvation Front” was to foster the democracy, dignity and freedom of the Romanian people.⁸⁷ It may be true that after the long period of living under a dictatorship people could not have understood other languages. In any case, orators did not know an alternative linguistic model. From a sociological point of view, one could interpret the situation as being dependent on its various directions, something which also determined the course of the revolution.

Meanwhile, the revolutionaries from Timișoara were the ones who experimented with the idea of reform properly speaking, as well as with that of instituting a revolutionary change of language.⁸⁸ Situated in the Western extremity of Romania, Timișoara was inhabited not only by native speakers of Romanian but also by citizens who understood Hungarian, German and Serbian. Others also knew English and French. They could follow the programs of Western TV channels and could listen to the “genuine” radio stations from the West. George Șerban, a writer and university professor, conceived a proclamation that caused a stir in March 1990. He explained that Romanians, Hungarians, Serbians and Germans had sacrificed themselves together for this revolution. European democracy would therefore mean the freedom of political opinion, a civilized dialogue among the political exponents, and a fair, loyal dispute for followers and goals. Yet, an authentic democracy drawn upon the European model could not be achieved without strong political parties. Even more

⁸⁶ Heinen, *Der Tod des Diktators und die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit*; Gabanyi, *Systemwechsel in Rumänien*; Adamson, *Socialism, Revolution, and Transition*.

⁸⁷ “Comunicatul către țară al C.F.S.N.” [Announcement to the country by the Council of the National Salvation Front] 22. 12. 1989, in Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 171–86.

⁸⁸ On the suppositions and consequences of the 1989 revolution in Timișoara, see Neumann, “Timișoara în memoria colectivă contemporană, Perspective fragmentare” [Timișoara in the contemporary collective memory, scattered perspectives], in Murgescu, *Revoluția română din decembrie 1989*, 21–44.

seriously, one could hear once again the old slogans according to which the historical parties were selling the country.⁸⁹ As a consequence, one could directly notice politics understood as a case of “histoire croisée” or “entangled history,” a case of productive adaptation and reinterpretation of history in the Romanian context.

In fact, for a long time no one knew where the Romanian revolution was heading. The only thing that remained after the social mobilization and agitation of the first days was an ensemble of disappointments sealed by the miners’ violent acts carried out in Bucharest’s University Square in June 1990. By this time, most of the Romanians already faced other concerns regarding their work place and how they could make a future for themselves in an environment that was in continuous change.⁹⁰

The party system was developed without an adequate social basis, because many people had previously been members of the Romanian Communist Party and now they refused becoming members of any newly-created party. Politics was done from “above.” Yet, those who took it upon themselves to do politics had too many duties at the same time: they were public personalities, university professors, and politicians in different ministries. No time was left for mediating politics in local and regional milieus. When the “National Salvation Front” split up into several other parties, it left behind much suffering. Parties were isolated from society and they became starting platforms for strategic networks. In 1996, the political analyst Mihaela Miroiu offered an analysis of the Romanian political system and accused it of isolation from socio-economic realities. She also showed how all the political parties were organized by their central leaders on the model of combatant troops and not on that of offering support to concrete politics. There were local party organizations that only got involved in electoral campaigns and which would be rewarded only if the central branch leaders had the chance to get to power.⁹¹ This brought back to mind “forms without substance” and the idea of politicianism.

Moreover, there was no continuity in point of parties, and the suddenly gained “freedom” led to the detachment of the political system from its social basis, to the absence of intermediary institutions and the domination

⁸⁹ “Proclamația de la Timișoara” [The proclamation of Timișoara], 11. 03. 1990, in Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 187–208. Also cf. Neumann, “Schimbările politice din România anului 1989,” 175–97, particularly 190–3.

⁹⁰ Roper, *Romania. The Unfinished Revolution*.

⁹¹ Pasti, Miroiu, and Codiță, *România – starea de fapt. I. Societatea* [Romania – State of the matter. I. Society] (Bucharest: Nemira, 1966), 129–47, quoted in Murgescu, *Istoria României în texte*, 401.

of non-transparent networks. The old political culture of “Balkan” origin continued to exist: this was a culture of ovations, egocentrism, passive discontent and revolt instead of one that co-decided the facts.⁹² This makes even more surprising the present-day polyvalence of the concept of *politician*, while the right-wing discourse of Corneliu Vadim Tudor is simply perplexing. The party he leads, the Greater Romania Party, became in 2001 the second political power in the state, and Vadim Tudor started his philippic against social-democrats whom he accused of betraying the holiest principles of the country when they appointed Hungarian deputy prefects:

I know history better than all the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party and I know that Hungarian politicians were and have remained, in their great majority, the most inveterate enemies of the Romanian people.⁹³

Vadim Tudor reproached the Hungarian politicians many things. He accused them of putting the interest of their own community beyond any other interest, and this made them into “enemies.”

My internet search brought to light surprising results regarding the identification of the semantic changes of the concept of *politics*. The online *Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language* mentions two different meanings for *politician*: first of all, “a political person,” in the neuter sense, and then, a person that transforms politics into a skillful and demagogical way in order to achieve one’s personal interests.⁹⁴ The Romanian version of the Wikipedia site interprets politics as follows: a) the science and practice of governing a state; b) a socio-historical activity and a struggle for power or ideological supremacy; c) a process through which decisions are taken within social groups.⁹⁵ The last interpretation among those enumerated above, one that reminds one of Max Weber’s definition of *politics*, seems to have been resumed in the Romanian context. Power no longer refers to the state, nor is it any more determined by power relations. From a socio-historical point of view, the semantic transformation

⁹² This represents another form of interrupted continuity: see Heinen, “Bildwechsel in Stereoskopie: Rumäniens symbolische Orte im Europa der Jahre 1945–2008,” 2009.

⁹³ Vadim Tudor, “Guvernul bicolor PDSR-UDMR trebuie debarcat” [The bicolor government between the Social Democratic Party of Romania and the Democratic Union of the Hungarians from Romania must be overthrown], in Papadima, Lindenbauer, and Kolar, *Der politische Diskurs*, 227–49.

⁹⁴ <http://dexonline.ro>.

⁹⁵ <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politica>.

of the concept of *politics* could be an effect of the interaction between the state and society: as a socialization of politics, on the one hand, and as a politicization of society, on the other, the structure of a competition-based democracy, the institutions of the market and the presence of loud mass media opinions have undermined the hermetic separation between politics and the private sphere and submitted it to the logic of public display.

This is why it should be no wonder that we can come across completely new pairs of words. One can read on the internet about a “politician” with a promising future,⁹⁶ as well as about a “politician” who gives us a treat.⁹⁷ On a private blog dedicated to events from the Prahova district, Iulian Maxim explains what triggered this word-play and a conscious semantic transformation of the term: politician (= negative) + treat (= positive) => positive; he thereby certifies the ever closer link between politics and society: *The time has come for a new type of politician*—thus sounds the title of Maxim’s comment from 6 January 2009.⁹⁸

Society and politics, the chosen one and the voter, they are the ones that determine the new ratio of reciprocal relations. What *politics* is and should be will be the topic of controversial, contradictory and conflicting debates between constitutional lawmakers and party strategies, between politicians and the public opinion, between intellectuals and journalists. This is how one can also explain the incident I presented at the beginning of this paper, one that led to the dismissal of the newly appointed Minister of Internal Affairs. *The politics* sustaining party leaders, democracy as a representation of local networks, and the opinions regarding the skillful use of mass media reveal the case of an unprecedented dispute in the history of Romania.

Conclusions

The concept of *politics* has undergone multiple transformations in Romania over the last two centuries:

1. At first, *politics* referred to what the principality directly meant, namely the representation of power in public and within the court ritual. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, which reached the Ro-

⁹⁶ <http://roxanaordache.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/liviu-dragnea-un-politician-cu-viitor-promitator> (last accessed 23. 02. 2009).

⁹⁷ <http://www.paralele-paralele.com/2009/02/un-nou-politician-care-ne-face-cinste.html> (last accessed 23. 02. 2009).

⁹⁸ <http://max-media.blogspot.com/2009/01/e-vremea-unui-nou-tip-de-politician.html> (last accessed 23. 02. 2009).

manian provinces by various means, *politics* acquired the meaning of public order and of constitutionality motivated by natural rights. In exchange, the state structure in the Romanian provinces was described through the concepts of early modernity, namely the Old Latin lexicon as well as the Greek and Turkish lexicons from semi-autonomous feudal states.

2. It was only after the Russian troops occupied the Danubian principalities in 1828 that a linguistic transformation occurred. This was brought about by a complicated interaction among the intellectuals' conscious adoption of Western terminology, the Tsarist specifications following the Enlightenment tradition, the aspiration to local autonomy among the boyars, and the religious interpretation embraced by the social segment of peasantry.
3. During the nineteenth century, the language evolved in another direction in the Transylvanian-Hungarian regions inhabited by Romanians because Austrian-Hungarians were significantly influential in the area. In the North-West of Romania, *politics* referred to the formulation of a claim for co-decision as well as to the solicitation to participate to the national administration of Transylvania. In comparison to the eschatological and excessively religious expectations of 1848 South-Eastern European revolutionaries, this was a lucid representation.
4. When the union of the Danubian principalities became a reality in 1859, everyday life became very different from the previous image of promised paradise. One could not speak of a euphoric disposition because the princely politics, first of all that of A.I. Cuza and then Charles I, led to a harsh resistance movement on the part of party leaders. Claims did not coincide with realities in this developing country because the Romanian nation was still "incomplete." Pathos and the representation of the "people's" redemption were in stark contradiction with its pragmatic foreign politics and with the banal domestic fight. Because governments did not really feel responsible before the parliament and the parliamentary opposition, they did not have to accept constraints or compromises. Even though the liberals and conservatives were putting into practice a pragmatic type of politics, they were also the ones who created ideologies. I.L. Caragiale's and M. Eminescu's glosses and pamphlets raised the aesthetic level of the debates, but they also transmitted a false image of what *politics* could and should accomplish. The criticism of Titu Maiorescu's "forms without substance" was conceived in view of the evolution of the Romanian language and it was later used to interpret political order.

5. The liberals and the conservatives also managed to attract political public opinion because the circle of those implicated remained predictable and social interests could be easily coalesced. Around 1900, they lost their connections. Even the West doubted political order, a situation that was proved by the criticism of civilization which several scholars put forth at the time. The revolts of the Romanian peasants proved that a large part of the population, namely those that left their mark on collective thought, was isolated. Intellectuals and men of science tried to find means to overlap the political and the social nation. They criticized superficial political debates and politicianism by profession and they adopted the French term of *politicien*, using it to the benefit of their critique. This is why Constantin Rădulescu-Motru's *Cultura română și politicianismul* (*Romanian Culture and Politicianism*) had a formative role.
6. Romania experimented with the idea of nation formation by means of eschatological expectations. Meanwhile, expectations and hopes changed. *Politics* would now be written with a capital P, it was thought as a noun, and it was no longer simply a synonym from the sphere of politics, but a political practice. The legitimation of decisions would have been simpler if governments from Romania had to fight for compromises. Yet, political practice endowed the executive branch with complete power while the voice of the opposition could be found either on the street or in the press. Thus, *politics* had acquired a whole array of meanings: electoral campaign by means of fraud; "politicianism," which could be identified in the numerous transfers from one party to another; the representation of social interests which were perceived as "the great national politics of a charismatic leader." As a consequence, in the Romanian public debate, the *politics* which represented a limitation of power and a balancing of various interests played no role whatsoever.
7. The complicated cultural legacy of Romania offered little protection against totalitarian claims. Broadly speaking, between 1944 and 1947, bourgeois parties could not challenge the communists' will to power and linguistic tools because the concepts of *democracy*, *people* and *justice* had always been "arbitrary" concepts that could be "substituted" by others. All in all, the concept of *politics* continued to have a polysemantic use even during communist times: at first, it referred to class struggle; some time later, after the consolidation of the regime, it stood for practical political science; subsequently, it identified Nicolae Ceaușescu's charisma and the "wise governing" of the one "chosen by destiny."

8. Yet, because charisma needs to be continuously confirmed, the Ceaușescu regime crumbled like a castle of cards. By this time, Romania had become completely isolated even from the rest of Eastern Europe. By 1989, however, news from the outside had entered the country and there were some hints indicating political changes in the neighboring countries. It was therefore not by chance that the revolution started in Timișoara, in the Western-most part of Romania, close to the borders with Hungary and Yugoslavia. Once Bucharest took over the initiative, Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorship came to an end. Without dissidence or democratic traditions, Romania's new post-revolutionary beginning meant the inheritance of a language that was unprepared for future projects. Once again, the images of a redeemed and united nation marked the public discourse and this time they were not so easily and tacitly accepted. This happened because the orientation towards Europe transmitted completely different models of interpretation—and it was easier to pick them up from Timișoara than from Bucharest. As the Romanian society was starting to define its specificity and as the cultural inter-dependences with the West became more and more substantial, new structures were formed that suggested contradictory images of the political field.

All in all, basic concepts always comprise some older meanings; they include contradictory semantics whose future depends upon the dispute among various interpretations. In the case of Romania, the evolution of a concept corresponding to *politics* is visibly made difficult by the country's past legacy. This happens because of several reasons, namely:

- *politics* used to claim to having a formative role in the past;
- it was overrated from a religious point of view;
- it lacked the tradition of compromise;
- it did not protect the individual before state institutions;
- it underestimated the importance of the opposition for the good functioning of democracy;
- it related itself to the nation and not to the state;
- the distinction among "statesman," "political person," and "politician" was almost always accompanied by a contemptuous critique of *politics*;
- the French, German and Soviet cultural transfers demanded complete representations of *politics* while the concepts of the Anglo-American pragmatic politics were never adopted;

- *politics* was conceived in a dichotomous way—it would either represent an altruist action in the interest of all “Romanians” or it would be the attempt to fulfill illegitimate individual interests;
- *politics* had never been understood as a dispute for better ideas, a compromise of diverse social orientations, or a fulfillment of the majority’s will which would also heed the minorities’ positions.

At present, the concept of *politics* is negotiated on several levels in Romania. This explains the predominance of insecurity alongside the process of transition: thus, we have *politică* as “politics,” i.e., the fight for power; we have *politică* as “policy,” i.e., an element with substance; and we have *politică* as “polity,” i.e., a dispute for an adequate order. The hope for security is not yet fulfilled because Romania cannot appeal to traditions and because the Romanian concept of *politică* must be re-semanticized in the sense of undergoing a quick change and establishing close contacts with the West. Such an endeavor represents an important opportunity to be exploited by those whose mind is set on carrying out reforms.

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Summary

Key-Concepts of Romanian History: Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages

The theoretical analyses and interpretations contained in the studies of this volume focus on key-concepts such as: *politics, political person, democracy, Europe, liberalism, constitution, property, progress, neam* (Romanian for kin), *nation, national character, national specificity, homeland, patriotism, education, totalitarianism, democracy, democratic, democratization, transition, censorship, manipulation, and freedom of expression*. The contributions aim to unveil specific aspects belonging to Romania's past and present, i.e., to identify the languages that either preceded or succeeded the most relevant political occurrences. They also offer alternative perspectives on Romanian culture through the relationship between the elite and society and novel reflections on the issues that bring out the delayed and unfinished modernization processes within the society and the state. The aim of this volume has been to articulate the results coming from various sciences, such as history, linguistics, sociology, political sciences, and philosophy, so that the past and present profiles of Romania are better understood by all those interested.

Rewriting the history of present Romania is an imperative. The Europeanization/Westernization of the Romanian world is closely tied to the ways in which history is read, mainly because the major political changes, such as the transition from totalitarianism to democracy, require new languages, alternative cultural and political thought benchmarks, as well as the distancing from behaviors of the past. Decoding the key-concepts of the Romanian socio-political languages is useful to the understanding of the past and the laying of a good theoretical foundation for the present, as well as for thinking about future projects. Conceptual history contributes to the knowledge of the semantics of concepts and their evolution. When examined in its relation to the process of language modernization, social

history, and the history of political thought, conceptual history will contribute to the understanding and promotion of European values, as well as to the fostering—among Romania's population—of mental reflexes consonant with those of the Western world to which the Romanian elites came closer two hundred years ago. Reinhart Koselleck's innovative method is highly applicable to the Romanian culture, as a significant part of the concepts he employs come from the nineteenth century, expressing ideals that are alien to our times. This soundly justifies the focus on interpretative alternatives expressed throughout the present volume.

Although there are differences in terms of information processing, and Koselleck's method cannot be found in all texts, it is important that the authors have focused on the history of Romania, advancing alternative viewpoints, and examining those angles that have been so far broadly neglected by Romanian historians.

The volume contributes to the study of Romanian history and historiography; to the analysis of expressions, notions, concepts and languages selected from legal, political and literary texts; its studies comment on the socio-political messages specifically embedded in these languages in different periods of Romania's modern and contemporary history. The contextualization of the researched phenomena facilitated the production of working hypotheses, of new interpretations and reasoned conclusions. Recommendations for the re-semanticization of a number of concepts considered by the authors able to improve present communication indicate the pragmatic side of the studies. The general theory of conceptual history is combined with case studies so that the texts of this volume account for the intrinsic significance of *Begriffsgeschichte*, on the one hand, and demonstrate how properly conducted research makes de-mythization and the objective understanding of the past possible by rewriting it, on the other. The history of the former communist states of Central and South-Eastern Europe demands multiple nuancing. It is equally true that whenever we try to find the inner meanings behind the concepts, we must take into consideration that in the selected examples from the above-mentioned regions we are dealing with different socio-political contexts, that is, with cultures and languages evolving differently as compared to the German or Western-European contexts. Despite this, what can undoubtedly be ascertained is that *Begriffsgeschichte* is making an exceptional world-wide career due to the originality of Reinhart Koselleck's work.

The studies published in the volume *Key-Concepts of Romanian History. Alternative Approaches to Socio-Political Languages* highlight the unknown, and most of the time the ideologized sides of modern Romanian

politics; they accurately point out the ways in which the Romanian national consciousness and the Romanian state were formed, the cultural and social gaps separating them from the West, as well as what has been done to the benefit of Romanians' Europeanization from 1859 to the present. The results presented in what follows do not claim to be conclusive: rather, they offer a credible image of Romanian modernity and promote openness towards an alternative way of academic approach, both theoretical and concrete, multi- and interdisciplinary, as well as perspectivist. Such a history is addressed to a reader interested in Romanian culture, politics, society and mentality, eager to acquire new information and learn more about the past through honest reflection, which will become part of his or her way of facing the future.

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This volume is a collection of studies that focuses on the concepts that have shaped Romanian cultural and political identity. It analyzes the dominant ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as their socio-political impact, and discusses the formation of the Romanian national state and its transition towards modernity by means of concepts such as patriotism, ethno-culture, property, and constitution. It highlights the importance of regional, communitarian-linguistic or religious diversity in view of an accurate understanding of Romania as a result of multiple influences and cultural heritages. It reveals a number of essential aspects regarding the formation of socio-political languages and mentalities as a result of the translation or import of words, notions and concepts. The volume comprises several ample studies, which are innovative from the point of view of content, analysis, and hypothesis, and which offer an international perspective on Romania's past and present.

ISBN 978-615-5225-16-1



9 786155 225161



Central European University Press

Budapest – New York

Sales and information: ceupress@ceu.hu

Website: <http://www.ceupress.com>